MYSTERY MAGAZINE

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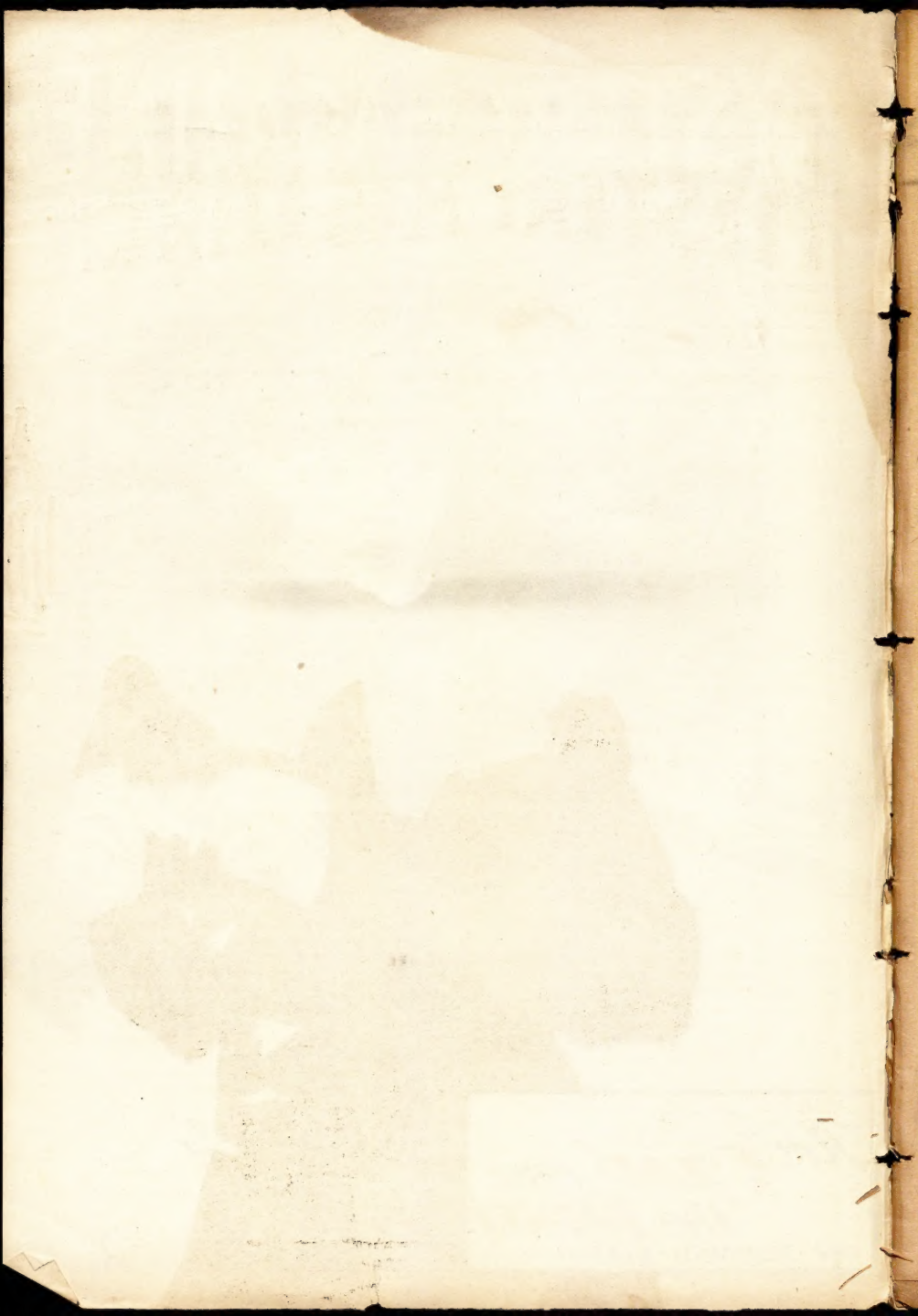
FEATURE DETECTIVE STORY

The "CZAR" and the RING

BY · EDMUND · ELLIOT ···



A thrilling Detective Story, "A CLUE OF FLAME," appears in our next issue

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THE "CZAR" AND THE RING

By EDMUND ELLIOT.

CHAPTER ONE

THE GIRL AT THE PAWNSHOP.

FOR the third time the girl approached the shop, but as on the two former occasions, as she neared the screened door she hesitated, and her pace slackened; for a moment she faltered irresolutely, casting furtive, half-frightened glances at the three gilt balls suspended above, and the garish display of more or less flawed jewels in the windows; then she was past, a frown of impatience and self-contempt contracting her delicate features.

But a few yards beyond the gleaming window she stopped and turned, her slim lithe figure tautening with sudden resolution.

"I'm a coward!" she whispered bitterly. "I will do it!"

And without further hesitation she almost darted into the shop.

But as the door closed behind her she paused abruptly, glancing timidly around the dim interior. She had never been in a pawnshop before, and rather to her surprise the environment, while unfamiliar, was not at all alarming; on the whole it differed little, except for the curious variety of stock, from any small jewelry-shop; and the man who lounged carelessly behind the counter was reassuring also.

She had pictured all pawnbrokers of the type of Shylock, gray-bearded, hook-nosed, crooked-backed old pirates, ever ready to prey upon the innocent, but this one was a rather good-looking, well-dressed young man, with a close-clipped Van Dyke beard and a bold pince-nez.

He looked very much like any ordinary business man, and after a momentary pause she approach-

ed the counter, and drawing a small morocco case from her muff, opened it and laid it tentatively before him.

"I—I should like to pawn this," she said hesitatingly.

The young man picked it up, removed the ring it contained, and examined it at first carelessly, and then with more interest.

"How much?" he asked casually, but the quick glance he cast at her was full of suddenly awakened curiosity.

The girl flushed slightly.

"I—I don't know," she stammered helplessly, "I don't—as much as you can give me—it is quite valuable. Would—would a hundred dollars be too much?"

The young man glanced from the ring to the girl inquisitively; she was singularly out of place in a pawnshop, he thought—out of place on Third avenue—indeed out of place on the street alone anywhere; one looked instinctively for a maid or groom.

Though fully twenty-one she retained the ingenious innocence of a child; there was about her an atmosphere of breeding; a delicacy and refinement, an aura of caste, that even the lowest unconsciously felt and recognized, and the young pawnbroker, glib of tongue, and skilled in leaden persiflage and brass-knuckle repartee, found nothing to say.

Without further comment he carried the ring to the end of the counter nearest the window, handed it to an older man seated at the desk, and together they examined it, whispering, and casting occasional glances at the girl.

Presently the elder man rose, the ring in his hand, and came toward her.

"This yours?" he asked rather gruffly. "It's a man's ring."

"I—yes—that is—it is my brother's," replied the girl nervously. "He is out of town. He asked me to pawn it for him and send him the money."

The pawnbroker glanced at her sharply, his keen eyes estimating the simple but evidently expensive gown, the rich furs, the gold mesh-bag, and jeweled watch.

"Huh!" he grunted. "Well, it ain't worth much except as a curiosity. Ten dollars would be a big loan—I could give you a couple of hundred on that," he added pointing to the watch.

"Oh! No!" exclaimed the girl hastily. "I wouldn't—I don't want——"

"Well, ten's the best I can do for you on this," interrupted the man, laying the ring upon the counter. "It may be valuable as an heirloom or an antique, but that's all it's worth to me."

The girl's eyes widened in surprise.

"But it's the——" she began, and paused suddenly in confusion. "I—I'll take the ten," she added hurriedly.

The man nodded indifferently.

"What's the name and address?" he asked brusquely.

The girl flushed darkly.

"Must—I? Miss—Satterly——" she stammered, "420—I—I mean the Belmont."

The pawnbroker smiled grimly, picked up the ring again, and disappeared behind his desk, emerging presently with a ten dollar bill and a ticket which he laid before the girl, who carelessly slipped the bill into her glove, and stood staring at the ticket with an expression very like dismay.

"What—what do I do with this?" she asked.

The man looked at her in amazement.

"Why, when you want to get the ring out, bring it back, with the money and interest," he replied.

"Can't I get it without the ticket?" the girl asked anxiously.

"If you remember the date and particulars—and we remember you," replied the broker, shortly. "Cost you a quarter extra for a lost ticket."

He turned away apparently disgusted at her ignorance, and the girl slowly left the shop, the ticket clinched in her hand. But once outside she hurried to the first side street and as soon as she was around the corner tore the ticket into fragments and dropped them in the gutter, then with a sigh of relief she continued westward to Fourth Avenue, where she turned south.

At Twenty-third street she entered one of the many shops that line the arcade of the Metropolitan Building, and passing rapidly through onto the arcade, emerged upon the Madison Avenue side where stood a very correct motor-brougham, and as she appeared an equally correct footman sprang to the door.

"Home, please, Richard," she said quietly, and as the car glided smoothly up the avenue she sank back upon the cushions with a weary sigh.

"Oh, I wonder if I have done right!" she mummured. "I wonder—— Oh, if Ward were only here!'

CHAPTER TWO.

DETECTIVE SERGEANT CONNERS.

FIFTEEN minutes later a heavy-shouldered, bull-necked man, with a shrewd but rather pleasant face and a pair of restless Irish-blue eyes, strolled leisurely into the pawnshop of S. Abraham & Son.

"'Lo, Sam! 'Lo, Nathan!" he greeted familiarly. "Keep on the job," he added genially, as the elder man turned from a customer and came toward him. "I ain't in no rush."

He lounged carelessly against a showcase full of miscellaneous articles, until the two or three persons in the shop had completed their business, and then he sauntered over to the counter and leaned his elbows upon it.

"How long since you been appointed special 'Uncle' to th' Four Hundred?" he asked, grinning.

Sam and Nathan returned the grin, but there was an anxious expression in their eyes never-

theless. Detective Sergeant Conners' jokes very often meant a financial loss that was no joke at all.

"I suppose you meant the little queen who blew in a few minutes ago," answered Nathan, with affected unconcern. "Nothing wrong with her, is there, Dan?"

"Never can tell," replied the detective, keenly enjoying the evident anxiety of the two pawnbrokers. "I picked her off before she came in. Don't you know who she is?"

"No," returned Nathan, still more uneasily; "she said she was 'Miss Satterly—the Belmont.'"

Connors chuckled but made no comment.

"What'd she leave with yer?" he asked.

Sam hastily placed the ring and the stub of the ticket upon the counter, and the detective after a cursory examination threw them impatiently down.

"Ten bucks for that junk!" he said contemptuously. "Looks like you was stuck anyway. Well, so-long!"

He sauntered out without further words, pausing a moment at the threshold to take stock of a young man standing at the curb, and evidently watching the shop door with considerable interest.

He was a tall, well-set-up, immaculately attired young man of perhaps thirty, whom Conners immediately classified as the "real thing."

"Hello, Bo!" said the detective cheerfully, "waitin' for me?"

"I rather imagine I am," replied the young man pleasantly. "Mr. Dan Conners, I believe. What are you, Central Office?"

"You're wise," answered the detective grinning. "Detective Sergeant Dan Conners. I ain't got no cards an' I ain't flashin' my star promiscuous, but maybe you'll take my word for it."

"Naturally," assented the young man; "besides, I've seen you before; you had charge of the presents at the Lee-Martyn wedding. Conners, I want to talk to you. Is there any quiet place around here where I can see you privately?"

"Sure," replied the detective readily. "Casey's is as good as any joint around here—and quiet, too—Mister Ward Mindham."

The young man started slightly, and glanced at Conners keenly, but he made no remark. After all it was not surprising that the detective should recognize him; the son and heir of old Peter Mindham would be a shining mark, and besides as a noted horseman and whip himself his picture was often in the papers.

Seated at a table in the deserted backroom of Casey's, Mindham came to the point at once.

"There were two things I wanted to see you about, Conners," he began easily. "In the first place it has long been in my mind to make a contribution to the Police Pension Fund. I don't suppose you would object to seeing this gets to the right party."

"This" was a hundred-dollar bill neatly folded with the numerals uppermost, and Conners pocketed it with alacrity:

"Sure," he replied gravely, though his eyes twinkled and his mouth twitched slightly. "Always willin' to oblige, Mister Mindham."

"And secondly," continued Mindham, "I want to know why you followed a certain young lady from the Abraham pawnshop to her car at the Madison Avenue entrance of the Metropolitan Building?"

The half-formed grin faded from Conners' face, and for a moment he stared at Mindham in silence; then he slowly drew the hundred dollar bill from his pocket and held it in his hand.

"Say," he said, "let's get down to cases. Where do you stand on this deal? You ain't cookin' no trouble for th' kid, are you?"

Mindham leaned forward and placed his hand confidentially upon the detective's sleeve.

"Look here, Conners," he said earnestly, and Dan Conners, shrewd judge of men, could not mistake the sincerity of the tone; "you know who the young lady is, of course. General Sheldon Lee's daughter. You probably know from the papers the relation in which it is rumored she and I stand to each other. Now, I tell you frankly and on my honor, there is no one who cares more for her—and for her happiness—than I do. But there is no formal engagement, for the reason that her father does not wholly approve of me just now."

Conners nodded, and by way of reply slipped the bill back into his pocket.

"Now, I'll give you my part of the story first," continued Mindham. "I've been down at Virginia Hot Springs for the last week with my mother, who has been ill. I returned to New York this morning, transacted some business on the lower Eastside, and then took the Third Avenue L for Forty-second Street, intending to take a taxi from there to the Lees.

"Imagine my amazement when as the train was leaving the Twenty-third Street station I saw beneath me on the sidewalk Miss Jean Lee—standing alone before the Abraham pawnshop.

"As soon as the train pulled into the next station I dashed down the avenue, and back toward Abraham's, and was in time to see her disappear through the door.

"Even then I thought I must be mistaken—deceived by a chance resemblance—so instead of going in I tried to see through the window. I could not see Miss Lee, but I did see the two pawnbrokers examining a ring; they were not four feet from me as they leaned over the best light, and, Conners, it was my ring, the Colona jade ring, that has been an heirloom in my family for six generations."

CHAPTER THREE.

THE MAN WITH THE JADE PIN.

"THE ring is a coiled serpent of chased gold," Mindham continued, "with a jade head with ruby eyes, and on the crest of the flat head are engraved the arms of the ancient Roman family of Colona.

"Intrinsically it is worth little; as an antique it is valued at several thousand dollars—to me it is priceless. It is a sort of amulet to us; for over two hundred years the oldest son has always worn it either on his finger or about his person.

"But the main point is, that before I went away last week Miss Lee begged me to let her have it while I was gone. It is too heavy to wear—even for a man. I usually keep it in my traveling-desk so I may have it at hand. Why in heaven's name she pawned it—of all things—I can't understand."

Conners frowned perplexedly.

"It warn't for th' dough, anyway," he said thoughtfully. "She had a dozen things on her that would have cashed in ten times ten. Besides—— Did you follow her?"

"I followed you," replied Mindham. "I didn't dare get too near, she might have turned."

"Huh!" grunted Conners, "then you didn't see what she did when she turned the corner?"

"What she did?" repeated Mindham questioningly.

"Yes," returned the detective slowly, "I don't know after all as it's any more curious than her pawning the ring at that, but it was a queer thing to do just the same—she tore up the ticket. Blamed if the whole thing don't beat me," he added, as Mindham stared at him in dumb amazement.

"But—but why on earth——" began Mindham.

"But why on earth anything!" interrupted Conners irritably. "There ain't no sense in th' whole business! Now look here; you don't want me in this officially, of course, but I can give you some advice, and it's this—— By the way," he interrupted himself, "did Miss Lee expect you back today?"

"No," returned Mindham uneasily, "not for some days yet. Mother took a sudden turn for the better, and I ran up for a day or two."

"Huh!" growled Conners. "Well, if it warn't that she'd probably hear you were in town, I'd say you run right back again; but as it is, the thing for you to do is to go and see her this afternoon—and don't make a peep about the ring. Tell her you had to come up on business and must return at once—and do it."

"Go back to Hot Springs?" asked Mindham blankly.

"Just that—and stay there as long as you intended in the first place," answered the detective emphatically. "This surprisin' folks don't pay—mostly you are the one that's surprised. You just wait till you're expected before you come back, and in the meantime I'll see that Abraham don't give up the ring till he talks to me—see?"

Mindham nodded doubtfully.

"But I must know," he said undecidedly. "I can't—and yet possibly you are right, Conners; I'll take your advice."

He rose and held out his hand and the detective grasped it heartily.

"That's th' stuff!" he answered. "And after you've seen Miss Lee, meet me here. It's three-thirty now, and I'll be off duty at four. Suppose you drop in here about five."

And with that understanding they parted, Conners to saunter slowly back to Abraham's, while Mindham entered a taxi and was driven directly to the Lee home on the summit of Murray Hill.

But at the Lee home a disappointment awaited Mindham; Miss Lee had returned about an hour ago, the elderly butler informed him, but had almost immediately gone out again, leaving no word as to her destination or the probable time of her return.

General Sheldon Lee was also out, and madame was taking tea with her daughter, Lady Constance Powell-Martyns, at the Ritz. No, he was sure Miss Jean had not joined her mother—she had not dressed, and the car had gone in another direction.

"Well, where's Mr. Harvey, then?" growled Mindham exasperated. "Is there no one at home, Parker?"

"No, sir. Mr. Harvey is in Philadelphia—hor was goin', sir," replied the butler apologetically. "But Hi don't think Miss Jean will be long, sir; she got a note—it was like Mr. Harvey's writin' —and——"

A sharp, decisive ring of the front doorbell interrupted him.

Mindham strolled toward the library as the butler went to the door, but at the sound of the visitor's voice he turned hastily back.

"You, Conners!" he exclaimed. "Are you looking for me? What's up?"

Conners pushed past the reluctant butler unceremoniously.

"Yes," he answered hurriedly. "I want to see you a minute. Where's all the folks?"

"All out," replied Mindham. "Here, come into the library. It's all right, Parker," he added to the astonished butler. "I'll ring if I want you."

Conners did not wait to be questioned, but as soon as the door was closed he began aggressively.

"Say, do you know a short stocky feller about fifty—thick curly black hair and mustache, slightly gray—black eyes, kinder fierce lookin'—long slender hands like an artist's or musician's—dark complexion—speaks with a slight accent—looks like a Greek or a dago of some sort—dresses and talks like a gent, and wears a jade pin in his tie?"

Mindham hesitated, half smiling at the rapid-fire description.

"No," he replied after a moment's thought, "I'm afraid I don't. Why?"

"Because," replied Conners, "he's the gink that's got your ring."

CHAPTER FOUR.

THE "CZAR."

"GOT my ring!" exclaimed Mindham, astonished. "What—I thought—how did he get it?"

"Look at this!" snapped the detective, putting a single sheet of the Belmont notepaper into Mindham's hand, "who wrote that?"

Mindham stared as he looked at the writing.

"Why," he gasped, "it's—no, by Jove, it isn't! It's a deuced clever imitation of Miss Lee's handwriting, but I am willing to swear it's a forgery! But it's signed J. Satterly. Why, that's Jean's middle name—Jean Satterly Lee."

"Hu-huh!" returned Conners dryly, "and it's the name she pawned the ring under, too."

"But, great Scott!" cried Mindham excitedly, as he realized the purport of the note, "you don't mean that Abraham gave up the ring on this order?"

"Why not?" asked Conners, taking the letter from Mindham's hand. "It reads all right, don't it?

"'S. ABRAHAM & SONS:

"'Gentlemen: I have discovered that I have lost the ticket for the jade-headed snake ring I pawned for ten dollars with you a half-hour ago. I am so afraid some dishonest person may find it and redeem the ring as it is very valuable. I should never have pawned it at all, and I want to redeem it at once.

"'Please give it to bearer, who will pay you what is due.

"'Yours, J. SATTERLY.'

"Reads straight, don't it? Hotel Belmont paper and all. Sam wouldn't know her writin'."

Mindham sank into a chair, his eyes wide with bewilderment and chagrin.

"But—but my ring?" he asked, fearfully. "Who would want it? Who could have known about it?"

"Well," replied Conners, grinning half apologetically, "if it weren't for the handwritin' imitatin' Miss Lee's, and the fact that the note describes the ring, most any smooth guy, who saw her destroy the ticket, might have picked up the pieces and doped out this scheme. I ought to be broke for not doing it myself—but as it is, whoever wrote the note not only knew her handwritin', but knew what she pawned too, for the ticket only read 'Ring—Miss Satterly—Belmont Hotel.'

"He must have been on th' job the same time we was," he added disgustedly, "and we neither of us got hep, and he must have slipped in and copped th' ring, while we was lappin' up sas-a-par-rilla at Casey's. Say honest, I ought to go back to harness and pound th' pavement."

"But—but what shall I do now?" asked Mindham, helplessly. "What does it all mean?"

"Well," replied Conners slowly, "considering the way things is developin', I guess the best thing to do is to wait for Miss Lee and just put it up to her. I'll duck if—— Say!" he interrupted himself suddenly, "her brother Harvey's a pretty hot sport, ain't he? I heard he'd been makin' th' 'White Lights' buzz, an' the old man had cut off about four-fifths of his allowance till he shook th' lobster push. How about him as promoter of this deal?"

In spite of his perturbation Mindham almost smiled.

"No," he replied dully, "there's nothing in that theory. Harvey's a bit wild, and the general's come down on him rather hard, but there's nothing really bad about him. He's been occupying my rooms since I've been away, and I imagine he'll remain with me until the general softens a bit."

"Huh!" growled Conners not at all convinced. "Where do you live—Riverside Drive, ain't it?"

"No," replied Mindham, moodily, "I've rented that house since the governor died. It's too lonely with mother South all winter and abroad all summer. I have the second floor in the old Mindham house on the 'Avenue,' just below thirty-fourth street. The basement and first floor have been altered into shops, you know, and above me are only offices. That's why I like it. I and my man are the only persons in the house after six o'clock."

"Well," began Conners, but the jingle of the telephone bell upon the desk at his elbow interrupted him, and being the nearest to the instrument, he lifted the receiver from the hook half unconsciously, but at the first words he started half out of his chair, and a smothered exclamation broke from his lips.

It was not until the man at the other end of the wire had repeated his question twice that Conners answered, and then Mindham stared at him in amazement, for his voice, in tone and accent, was a clever imitation of Parker's.

"General Lee, sir. Yes, sir. This is General Lee's 'ouse. The general his at present hout, sir. Very himportant, sir? Habout 'is daughter, sir? Miss Jean, sir? Hi trust nothin' his wrong, sir. Hif you will leave your number, sir, hi'll—— Very good, sir! You will call again in 'alf an hour. Hi'll tell 'im, sir."

Connors slammed the receiver on the hook and sprang to his feet, his keen blue eyes sparkling with excitement.

"Know who that is?" he cried hurriedly. "It's the 'Czar'! I'd know that voice in hades! The slickest crook alive—he's known to the police of every country on earth, and there ain't one of us ever got anything on him. He's—wait a minute!"

He took the receiver down again and listened a moment.

"Number, please!!" The tone was crisp, business-like, and delightfully feminine.

"Hello, Central!" he replied hastily, "where was that call from I had just now? This is General——"

A low mocking laugh, distinctly masculine, floated over the wire, and a soft voice with the faintest trace of accent replied:

"Ah! the Senor Conners! So I thought! But you did the estimable Parkers very well, Senor; only you overdid him. I shall have to communicate with General Lee in some other way. Adios —Senor Dan Conners!"

Conners, his eyes blazing with anger, raised the receiver as though to hurl it along the wire into the face of the man who mocked him, but instead he put it very gently on the hook and with a long gasping breath sank into his chair.

"Well, what do you know about that," he asked, addressing the world at large rather than Mindham. "I'll bet that's th' feller that copped your ring! Th' gall of him! Say, he's th' best ever!" he added with a flash of admiration. "He can pass as a Frenchy in France, a Dago in Italy, a Spaniard in Spain, and a Turk in Turkey. As a matter of fact he's a Russian, that's why he's called the 'Czar'; but no one knows his real name, and he's got a string of aliases a yard long.

"Besides that he's an artist, bug on pictures and he could make ten thousand a year as a jewel expert—if he was straight—which he ain't, in anything. He's a counterfeit, smuggler, blackmailer, and all-around high-class confidence man, but you can't get him with th' goods."

"But what did he say about Miss Lee?" asked Mindham anxiously.

"Just that he wanted to see the general about her. Goin' to propose an a-liance ma'by."

Mindham flushed and his hands clinched.

Conners grinned slyly.

"Sure!" he added, "why not? He always lugs around some sort of a title. From th' line of talk he put up just now, I guess he's a grandee of Spain this trip."

He rose as he spoke, and departed to "put the office hep that the 'Czar' was on the job again and that something was likely to be doing pronto."

The matter of the ring they decided to leave in abeyance until Mindham had seen Miss Lee—which Ward devoutly hoped would be soon.

In this Ward was doomed to disappointment, for Mrs. Lee, rosy and voluble, presently arrived with the information that Jean had sent word to her at Lady Constance's, that she was going with Harvey (poor, dear Harvey, his father didn't understand him in the least, and it was perfectly dear of Ward to take him under his wing) and a party of young people for an automobile spin down to a queer old inn on Long Island and back by moonlight; but what enjoyment could be got out of motoring in March—even if there was no snow—she couldn't see; and why had Harvey come back so suddenly from Philadelphia? He'd only gone that morning to spend a week-end with a college chum. Still, Ward certainly must remain to dinner—quite *en famille*—etc., etc.

But the thought of the stately function, with only the stern, didactic general and his good-natured but prolix spouse, was too much for Mindham, so pleading a previous engagement he presently made his escape.

CHAPTER FIVE.

A TELEPHONE MESSAGE.

CONNERS' visit to Center Street netted little in the way of information.

The last heard from the Czar was from a private agency operative who, while in Buenos Ayres some six weeks before, had seen and recognized him at the races, and had casually mentioned the fact in a personal letter to his friend, the commissioner's secretary. At that time he was posing openly as a wealthy Mexican traveler of sporting proclivities and cosmopolitan tastes, but doubtless subtly encouraging the persistent rumor that he was in reality on a highly important secret mission.

The commissioner had tipped off the Buenos Ayres chief as to the indentity of his city's illustrious and illusive visitor and shortly thereafter "Don Esteban y Girones Hernandis" had quietly dropped out of view.

"Huh!" growled Conners, sitting on a desk and chewing at the stub of a cigar while he digested this meagre and unsatisfactory information.

"A spaghetti don in Argentine, eh! Seems to be sticking to the part from his talk-talk over th' wire; and Sam said the gink who redeemed the ring was some kind of high-class ginny. Guess I'd better see Joe."

But Joe—José Martenez—the dapper, keen-eyed Spaniard, whose duty it was to keep a fatherly eye upon the hotels, boarding-houses and other "hang-outs" where his countrymen congregated (and who, because the last thing any one would suspect him of being was a central office dick, was an extremely valuable man), had heard nothing of any Mexican hidalgo or any one else answering Dan's description.

"And I don't think you'll find him hanging out in any of the Spanish quarters," added Joe thoughtfully. "From what I've heard of the 'Czar' his chief line of late years has been high-class blackmail, and he wouldn't find many big-paying customers down my way. He's more likely throwing a front at the Ritz or the Astor. There's a proverb that says, 'If you can't find the fox's hole, lay for him in the chicken-yard'."

Conners' face brightened, then he grinned genially.

"You've th' makin's of a real cop yet, me son," he exclaimed. "You haven't overloaded me with information but you've give me th' stub of an idea

that may lead somewhere—and I'll be followin' it."

And he turned toward the nearest subway station.

"I ain't much use at this deduction stuff," he mused as the train whirled him uptown, "but I'll have to hand it to Joe on that fox-and-chicken-yard stuff—an' in this case th' Lee bunch seem to be th' chicken-yard all right.

"But who-in-'ell can he be gettin' after there? If that bunch ain't blackmail-proof no one is. There ain't one of 'em that ain't—huh! Except th' cub! That young Harvey Lee has been hittin' th' high spots in th' white-lights a bit lately. Now I wonder if that's it? Got th' boy in a hole an' workin' th' sister to save him! But that ain't like th' Czar either. I d'know as I ever heard of his playin' against a woman—still——"

He left the subway at the nearest station to the Lee home. If that was the "chicken-yard"—if Jean Lee, or her father's money were the bait—he intended to take Joe's tip and lay for the fox there.

Maybe it might be a good idea to seek an interview with Jean, tell her exactly how things stood and advise her to come clean in the whole affair for her own sake—or would it be better to let Mindham make that play?

When he had advised that young man to say nothing and return South at once the Czar had not appeared in the matter. Now it was obvious that the girl, or her brother, or both, were threatened by a dangerous criminal and it was, it seemed to Conners, the part of wisdom for all the parties interested in thwarting this danger to come to an understanding and present an unbroken front. He had better see Mindham at once.

Being well after six the door leading to the offices was locked, but his ring was answered after a slight delay by a very correct servant who informed him that he was Mr. Harvey Lee's man, "Mr. Lee having been occupying the apartment during Mr. Mindham's absence in the South with his friend and guest Count Gonzaga——"

"Who?" snapped Conners in a voice that made the valet jump.

"Count Gonzaga, sir; a Spanish nobleman, sir, and a friend of Mr. Lee's."

"Huh!" grunted Conners. "What's he look like? Short stocky gink; dark; black hair, thick and curly, slightly gray; long, slender hands like an artist's—or a dip's; wears a jade tie-pin? Does that fit him?"

"Exactly, sir," replied the servant. "I regret that he is also out with Mr. Lee——"

The telephone on the desk interrupted, and Conners, who stood nearest, picked up the instrument.

"Hello! Hello! What! Speak slower! Don't get excited. No, Mindham is out. This is a friend of his. Sure, I'll find him. Is that Miss Lee? Well, this is Detective Sergeant Conners of the Central Office. I'm a friend of Mr. Mindham—you can tell me anything. What! Where are you? Plainfield? Yes! Yes! What street? Never mind, I'll find it. Sure! Don't you worry, I'll find it—you sit tight. Hello! Hello! Hell——"

Conners slammed the receiver on the hook and turned to the staring valet.

"Listen, you," he growled, "and get this straight. As soon as Mr. Mindham comes in tell him this: Miss Lee has been kidnapped by the 'Czar' and is being held in a house over in Jersey. I won't give the address because I don't want him trailin' along. But tell him to sit tight here and I'll let him know as soon as I can. Tell him she's all right. They tried to drug her and she let them think they had, but when she was left alone she got to a 'phone. Make him understand she hasn't been hurt and won't be—see! It's money they want. Got it straight now? All right then!"

And he dashed for the street.

CHAPTER SIX.

A HOT TRAIL.

TEN minutes later, safely closeted in a telephone booth, he was in communication with headquarters.

"We got th' 'Czar' at last, chief!" he exulted after a brief statement of the facts. "Got him dead to rights! Must be getting old to pull anything as raw as that. Kidnappin'. For th' love o' Mike, he must have gone nutty for fair."

"Maybe," replied the chief doubtfully. "I wouldn't be laying any big odds on that, though. And I ain't giving out any press statements yet a while, either."

"Well, my God, I'm to get after him, ain't I?" asked Conners indignantly, his enthusiasm somewhat chilled.

"Sure, you get after him," ordered the chief, "and get him, too—if it's really him. Mindham and the general will have every first-class agency on the job tomorrow. Expense is no object to them—nor to us. I'll send Jim and my car down to the ferry; you meet 'em, and get there on the jump! Pick up a couple of local men to make the pinch—and make it!"

Conners lost no more time than traffic conditions and ferry facilities made unavoidable, and less than an hour later the chief's big personal car was roaring through the night, and in record time drew up at police headquarters in Plainfield.

The local chief, who had already been apprised of their coming by New York headquarters, was waiting them, and to him Conners explained the details.

"She said it was a big square wooden house painted brown," he told the chief, "and it stood

in big grounds on the outskirts of the town to the west. They crossed a railroad bridge just before they got to it, she said, and the street was lined with trees on both sides."

The chief exchanged puzzled glances with those of his men who stood near.

"Well, now, that's funny," he said at last. "There ain't but one house answers that description and that is the old Woodward mansion over the track. Woodward tractor people—millionaires—swells—been closed up tight since the old man died a year ago. Not even a caretaker there. Damn queer!"

"I d'know," returned Conners. "Just the place to pull a thing like this. Let's get out there."

Accompanied by the chief and a couple of men they drove through the town to where, at its very edge, surrounded by a couple of acres of wooded grounds, stood the old Woodward homestead.

Lonely and dark and deserted enough it looked in the pale moonlight. The lower windows tightly boarded up, the upper as tightly shuttered. The driveway and paths were overgrown with grass and weeds; the massive iron gates tight closed and fastened by a chain and padlock.

As the car drew up at the gate a man approaching from the opposite direction paused and looked curiously at them.

"Hello," he said after a moment's hesitation, apparently reassured by the uniforms of the two local officers. "What's going on at the old place tonight? Is it going to be opened up again?"

Conners stepped out of the car and approached the man close enough to peer into his face.

He appeared to be an ordinary harmless citizen, probably a resident of the immediate neighborhood.

"What made you think something is goin' on?" Conners asked sharply.

"Why," returned the other, apparently surprised and a trifle bewildered by the curtness of the query, "Why, nothing special—except yours is the second car I've seen here tonight. Yours going in, the other one coming out."

"Coming out!" exclaimed Conners. "When was this? When did it go in?"

"I couldn't tell you that," replied the stranger. "I was passing here about an hour ago—going to see my brother just beyond here—and of course I was surprised when I saw a big gray-bodied touring car with red lines come out of the drive. It stopped for a moment outside while the chauffeur got out and fastened the chain on the gate. Then it went on."

"Who were in it?" asked Conners excitedly. "Was there a girl?"

"Two," replied the man; "that is, two women. There was a foreign-looking man on the front seat with the chauffeur, and a man and a woman in the tonneau, with a young girl who seemed to be asleep between them."

"By God, it's them!" cried Conners. "They got onto the fact the girl phoned and beat it! Which way did they go—you?"

"Toward Philadelphia," replied the stranger. "Say, what's the matter? Is——"

"Did you happen to notice the number of the car?" interrupted the chief curtly.

"Why, yes," replied the man slowly, " I did. It was 00236 N. J. Say, I hope——"

But his voice was drowned in the roar of the engine as the big car rushed away into the night.

Inquiry at the first town elicited the information that a car as described had passed through about an hour before, traveling apparently without undue haste.

"Look here," said the chief, "this won't get us anywhere. They have a big powerful car and an hour's start. Even if they ain't making a race of it a stern chase is a long one. I guess right now they are about thirty miles ahead. I'm going to phone ahead and have them stopped."

He disappeared into the office of the service station before which they had paused. Several moments elapsed. Then he came out and slowly climbed into the car.

"Tell your man to turn around and take us back," he said to Conners. "We're stung!"

"What th' hell you gettin' at?" exclaimed Conners. "What's become of them?"

"Oh, they're all safe at Bound Brook," returned the chief dryly. "Only that big gray touring car with red lines, numbered 00236 N. J., happens to belong to Senator Wedge, and the senator and his daughter, son-in-law and little granddaughter are in it. also the senator says they certainly didn't stop at the Woodward place, though they passed it. I guess that feller there was stringing us along. and, say, where was that telephone message you got supposed to come from—because there ain't been a phone in the Woodward place since the old man died."

Conners, slumped down in his seat, said nothing. His feelings were too deep for words.

CHAPTER SEVEN.

COUNT UGO GONZAGA.

WHEN Mindham left Mrs. Lee to keep his apocryphal engagement and sauntered slowly to his chambers a few blocks away he was debating whether to spend a lonely evening at home, sending out for a frugal "snack" from a nearby restaurant, or to take the trouble to dress for an equally lone though far more elaborate dinner at his club.

The matter, however, was quickly decided for him, for at the threshold of his living-room he found himself staring at a stranger, who as he entered the door rose politely from the depths of his most comfortable chair, and bowed low before him.

For a moment they stood looking at each other,

while surprise, suspicion and lastly a frown of settled distrust clouded Mindham's usually good-natured face, then the stranger, with another low bow that was distinctly foreign, but with scarcely a trace of accent, spoke.

"Allow me, my dear sir," he began, "to apologize and explain this apparent intrusion. I am Count Ugo Gonzaga, a friend of your friend Harvey Lee. He is motoring with a party on Long Island, and as they are to return here about midnight for a little Bohemian supper, he asked me to attend to its preparation."

"No apology is necessary, count," replied Mindham somewhat stiffly. "Lee shares these diggings with me, and his friends are as welcome as mine. I am Ward Mindham, you know," he added by way of introduction.

The count bowed.

"So I judged from your luggage, which arrived this afternoon," he returned, with a wave of his hand toward the suitcase and kit-bag Mindham had sent by messenger from the station (his man he had left at Hot Springs).

"Of course you will return in time for supper," the count continued as Mindham picked up his bags and retreated toward his bedroom, explaining that he had a dinner engagement and must dress.

"Harvey would be quite broken-hearted if you did not—and Miss Jean, too—she is with them."

His glittering black eyes flashed a glance at Mindham, but he merely nodded casually.

"Of course," he replied as he disappeared into his room, and dressing hastily, he let himself out into the hall, directly from the bedroom, without bothering the count further.

It was a rude thing to do, he realized, but the man got on his nerves; he did not like him, and he was conscious also that, except for the absence of the jade pin, the count answered in every detail the description as given by Conners of the man they believed had taken his ring out of pawn. Of course that was absurd; the description would fit almost any well-dressed Latin, yet the thought kept recurring to him with annoying persistence all through his quiet dinner at the club and at the theatre afterwards.

It was quarter of twelve when he finally reached his chambers, and to his surprise the rooms were in darkness; nor when he switched on the lights were there any signs of the count or the supper.

Frowning discontentedly, he threw off his coat and vest, dragged his white lawn tie and collar from his neck with unnecessary violence, and flung himself into the deep leather chair before the still smoldering coals of the open fire.

But he had little time for reverie, pleasant or otherwise, for he was scarcely seated when, with a whir and a wholly unnecessary honking of horns two cars drew up at the curb; the street door was thrown open and a noisy, laughing crowd clattered up the stairs.

Mindham started up and stood listening, and at that moment a sound from his bedroom attracted his attention even above the rapidly approaching uproar in the hall; he sprang toward it eagerly, but even as his hand touched the knob the hall door burst open and a crowd of men and women rushed hilariously in.

Mindham had only time to note first, with a thrill of fear, that the men and women were anything but a type he would wish Jean to be with, and second, with a sigh of relief, that she was not with them, when Harvey Lee was upon him, shaking his hand and joyously thrumping his back.

"So this is why you hauled me back from Phili with that impressive telegram, you relic of effete nobility," cried the boy to the count, who had entered with them, "you knew old Ward was going to be here!"

"I'll have to plead not guilty," answered the count easily. "I have never had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Mindham, though I have heard much of him in the week I have known you, Harvey. But"—he laughed insinuatingly—"I should like to know why he is guarding the door of that room so valiantly."

The others took up his words, demanding that Mindham open the door, and between amazement at the count's denial of him, embarrassed at his coatless and collarless condition, and the sudden attack upon him, he stood bewildered, staring from one laughing face to the other.

It was the count himself who came to his rescue.

"Ah! But wait!" he cried gaily, "I see now, he was but fleeing from the ladies here; and we must admit he is scarcely groomed for company. And by the way," he added, becoming suddenly grave, "business before pleasure, you know; there is a little matter I must discuss with Mr. Mindham, and as I leave for Europe on an early steamer to-morrow, I have only to-night. Will you spare him to me for a few minutes, ladies and gentlemen?"

Without waiting for an answer he opened the door, thrust the dazed Mindham in, and following, shut the door and locked it.

"What the——" began Mindham, and stopped, appalled, horrified, for standing by the bureau, terror and a sudden joy commingling in her eyes, was Jean!

CHAPTER EIGHT.

CHEAP AT THE PRICE.

IN a flash the full significance of the situation forced itself upon him—the significance of it to the reckless crowd in the next room, the meaning of the count's various speeches—and the devilish ingenuity of the scheme almost overpowered him.

"You hound!" he said hoarsely, as Jean with a

little cry came to him and his arm closed protectingly around her, and he would have liked to have roared it, but in his utter helplessness his words were almost a groan.

The count smiled blandly.

"I am glad you see the strength of my position," he said softly. "I assure you I regret this contretemps as greatly as do you; but business is business, and I have only a few hours to spare.

"When I came to New York a few weeks ago, I found our young friend in the other room in sore straits on account of some debts—debts of honor at his club, and the like.

"Indeed so desperate was his plight that his sister, who was in his confidence, feared he might descend even to—*theft*."

He paused, smiling sardonically, as Jean, flushing painfully, turned her eyes away.

"There was a certain ring, for instance," he continued, "for which she was especially solicitous, particularly after she overheard me offer her brother several thousand dollars for it, and since she had no safe-deposit vault of her own, and could not well go to her father, she conceived the idea—or did I perchance suggest it in the course of conversation?"

Jean unconsciously nodded assent, and the count laughed lightly.

"Of pawning the ring for safe-keeping (and by the way, Miss Lee, it is well when destroying pawn-tickets, to *burn* them; torn papers are easily pieced, especially when one is opportunely on hand to pick them up before they scatter). This ring I later redeemed for her.

"She need not have worried about her brother's debts, however, for fortunately I was able to assist him and I hold this note for forty thousand dollars."

"Oh!" cried Jean indignantly, "it was only four thousand Harvey owed, Ward!"

"Yau damned blackmailer!" growled Mindham. "We'll end this farce now. How much will you take?"

"I will have forty thousand dollars for that note," answered the count decisively, "and for the ring I redeemed—ten thousand—fifty thousand in all. You have an account at the Day and Night bank, I believe, Mr. Mindham?"

"Only a few thousand, two or three," replied Mindham, "such an expert blackmailer as you are should have learned that."

The count shrugged his shoulders.

"It is very fortunate," he remarked, as Mindham, with sternly compressed lips, took a checkbook and some note-paper from his kit-bag, "that you arrived so opportunely. I fear the general, whom I intended to bring here by some simple ruse, might not have proved so amenable to reason."

"He would have killed you," returned Mindham shortly.

"And his daughter's reputation at the same time," added the count coolly, as he took the check and note, glanced at them, and going to the door into the hall, unlocked it and handed them to a man waiting outside (a man, by the way, whom Conners would have identified as "Mr. Lee's man") and a moment later they heard one of the waiting automobiles whirl away.

Mindham and Jean sat in silence, while the count, with a curious perverted pride in his methods, explained to Mindham how he had lured the girl to the house by the note forged in her brother's hand; how she had been gagged, bound to a chair and then locked in the closet of a vacant office on the floor above, until released by his confederate just before the denouement, and how her absence had been accounted for by a false telephone message to her mother.

How, having seen Conners approaching, he had sent his confederate to the door to play the part of young Lee's valet, and had himself slipped out to a nearby phone where, with his amazing gift of mimicry, he had personated Jean and sent the detective on a wild goose chase to Plainfield. A chase which, another accomplice notified by wire, extended well on towards Philadelphia.

"And I tell you all this," he concluded as he heard the returning motor draw up at the door, "because, as you say in America, I have turned my last trick. I am an old man now—yes, I am sixty-six, though I do not look fifty—and I shall—er—retire. Fifty years I have lived by the fruit of my brain, lived well, and I have never been caught!

"And you might say to my esteemed friend, Detective Sergeant Conners, if I do not see him again," he added, rapidly counting the bills his confederate brought him, "that the 'Czar' has gone home for good."

Together the four crept softly downstairs and entered the waiting motors, and so they parted, Jean and Mindham going north towards Murray Hill, and the Czar and his accomplice south, toward the steamer that was to start him on the first leg of his journey to his troubled fatherland.

That same afternoon came Detective Sergeant Dan Conners to the Lee home to see Mindham about the ring.

"Well, I see you got it," he remarked sadly as he eyed the green, red-eyed head and the golden coils on Mindham's middle finger.

"How did you know?" asked Mindham in surprise.

"The Czar told me," answered Conners, his sadness deepening. "Confound his gall! He had the nerve to invite me to the steamer. I didn't have anything on him with you and Miss Lee standing pat, so I went down to see him off. How much did it cost you?"

"Fifty thousand," replied Mindham cheerfully, "but it was worth it."

"That thing!" gasped Conners in astonishment.

"Well," said Mindham slowly, "it could be used as an engagement ring, and the bride came with it."

The Sandalwood Scent

By JULIAN KILMAN

DELANEY, who for years had patrolled the beat, would not recover from the knife wound inflicted by "Blimp" Cowan. When Cowan had put Delaney out and been arrested for the deed, two questions instantly had arisen in the aggregate mind of the district, and white boys, black boys and yellow boys wondered.

Would "Blimp," wise in all things, spill the beans on Haggerty in No. 2 police station for being too susceptible to the ladies? And who would the police captain choose to replace the faithful Delaney?

Meanwhile, in the alcove off the main room at the temporary quarters of No. 2, Captain Haggerty, florid-complexioned, a man of smiling exterior, stood with one hand clasped in a friendly manner on the shoulder of the man before him.

"The chief has O.K.'d ye, Dinnie, me lad," he said, "an' I'm givin' ye poor Delaney's beat. It'll be a regular fox trot afther thim fourteen months in the trenches."

Handsome, broad-shouldered, with hazel eyes and a complexion to be envied by a prima donna, Dennis McMahon grinned back at his superior.

"What'll they do to Cowan?" he asked.

Haggerty frowned and sat down. The flesh on the back of his neck, confined by the too-snug collar of the fastidious dresser, lay in purple rolls; the gray-green eyes were small; the cloak of amiability falling away disclosed to the eye of experience a sleek, purring personality. The lapse was for an instant only, and its feline quality entirely unappreciated by the younger man.

Seeming to divine a background to the question of the new patrolman, the captain went on smilingly:

"The kid-glove gang likes to call it the underworld, Dinnie, an' it's afther bein' their game. But the town's too small for that stuff. All there is to it is a lot o' niggers with feet so big they can hardly walk, a few snuffling Chinamen, and a handful of second-rate crooks who ain't got the nerve to work in the big burgs. Cowan was a mistake. He killed Delaney in a funk. The guy to keep an eye on down there is Chin Wong Foo."

"Chin Wong Foo?"

"Chin Wong Foo," repeated Haggerty, with a laugh. "Yah! His mug reminds me of a yellow mud pie. As near as I can make out he's a mutt; but he's got a little doll wifie who speaks English, Dinnie, an' he's murderously jealous of her. Her name is Toy Sing, an' she'll be afther havin' an eye out for the new sojer-boy cop, for she's a regler flirt."

Throughout the weeks that followed, over and over went Denny's beat. On Michigan avenue to Chin Wong Foo's, to Cedar past the Blackamoor's place, and through the alley to the box where, once an hour, twenty minutes after the hour, for eight nocturnal hours, the young patrolman opened the door, pulled down the hook and pressed the button. Twice each night a lieutenant visited him, and not infrequently Captain Haggerty himself, driving a runabout, stopped by. The detail was about as exciting as acting guard over a bunch of schoolgirls. Perhaps Cowan's sentence to the death penalty had had something to do with the quietude; perhaps not.

But at this juncture, a June evening, there came diversion. While it was still light Young McMahon paused a moment in front of the tea shop of Chin Wong Foo to glance at a new window display of fans, the infinite variety of which had attracted his eye; also, incidentally, it was in the back of his mind to get a good look at the stolid figure of the proprietor ensconced like a stone image behind the counter. The building, which stood apart, abutted on the walk, with a narrow iron-railinged balcony overhead projecting from the second story a matter of two feet or so.

As McMahon stood peering into the shop window he grew conscious of a scrutiny from above, and turning suddenly caught the flash of a woman's dainty rounded arm in loose-flowing sleeve. The next instant it was gone.

Then an obese man's figure materialized in the doorway of the tea shop. It was Chin Wong Foo, at last jarred free of his perch. His onyx eyes, set in the flat parchment-like yellow face, were fixed on those of McMahon.

"You like 'um?" he demanded, grinning.

"Like what?" returned the patrolman.

"Like 'um fans, pletty things!"

"Sure thing, Chin. They're all right."

The Oriental stepped closer to McMahon, his nose in the air, apparently gazing off into the sky. Presently, without further comment, he waddled back into his shop, a scowl on his brow.

"Now, what do you think o' that?" mused McMahon to himself.

When he finished his trick and was removing his uniform at the station, Haggerty came in. McMahon had not seen the captain for several days.

"How goes it, Dinnie?" demanded the big man.

"Fine, sir," returned McMahon.

Haggerty strolled over, his eye fixed admiringly on the slim waist of the partially disrobed young man. Once his own had been slim. Suddenly he picked up McMahon's visored cap and balanced it in his hand.

"When did ye see little Toy Sing?" he inquired casually.

In the act of slipping on his civilian coat, McMahon's arms arrested themselves.

"What makes you think I saw that Chink dame?"

Haggerty nodded and winked knowingly.

"Easy, Dinnie. There's nothin' bein' pulled in the precinct that I'm not afther knowin' about."

McMahon stared unbelievingly at his superior.

"I did get a glimpse," he said slowly, "of the little ar-rm of her. An' I saw the big Chink, her husband, too."

"Did he get off his stool?"

"Sure! An' came to the doorway, sniffing the air as if he was a bird dog."

The big captain laughed.

"Toy Sing's a sly one, Dinnie. Here! Smell o' this."

He handed over to McMahon his patrolman's cap. The young man placed it to his nostrils.

"Perfume!" he exclaimed wonderingly. "How did it get there?"

"Toy Sing dropped it on you," returned the captain, with a grin that showed in spite of himself. "That's the way of the little beauty. It's sandalwood, and she has it in little pills that break easy when she drops 'em down on you from the overhead balcony, so you'll look up and flirt with her."

It was some hours before the significance of Haggerty's interest in the dainty little Chinese woman came home to the young patrolman, and then it was verified in a convincing manner. The next evening but one when McMahon approached the tea shop from the south, a small hand flashed from the side window and something white sped to the ground. It was a missive neatly folded, and lay almost at his feet. The young patrolman retrieved it instantly. It was redolent of the now familiar scent of sandalwood. Apparently no one had observed the incident. A few steps carried McMahon past the front of the tea shop.

The note he read was as follows:

"Evely night nine o'clock Chin Wong Foo smoke opium for thlee hours at Ing Ging's. Tomollow night ten o'clock Toy Sing meet beautiful policeman corner Hickory and Remsen stleets, not far away in the distance."

Dennie McMahon pocketed the billet-doux and continued his way, chuckling over the conquest he made of his hidden admirer. At four o'clock that morning when he went off duty he asked for and was granted one day's leave, and the following night, in civilian clothes, stood loafing about the residential corner of Hickory and Remsen streets. Promptly at ten o'clock a diminutive woman heavily veiled came toddling along. The couple walked and talked, the bird-like voice of the Chinese woman occasionally breaking out in a tinkle of laughter.

McMahon was amused to learn that Toy Sing had grown up in New York, where she was educated, and spoke English as well as he himself. She hated her husband, whom she was forced to marry, as he treated her brutally.

"Your funny note, then?" he inquired.

They had reached the downtown section of the city, and the young man, in deference to the expected tastes of his companion, passed before one of the stylish upstairs Chinese restaurants.

"No! No!" quickly demurred the little woman. "You do not understand. His friends may see us in there. And about my note: I wrote dialect which I thought you would expect to read if it came from me."

McMahon guided the little woman to a well-lighted doorway.

"Let's see your face," he pleaded.

She drew aside the veil, disclosing cameo-like features.

"You are a little peach!" he exclaimed admiringly.

Toy Sing permitted the veil to drop back, and they resumed their walk.

"That's what your boss said," she remarked.

"Haggerty?" repeated the young patrolman.

"Yes," went on Toy Sing. "I don't like that man." There was a hissing intake of breath. "He used to follow me. He's in love with me."

When they returned the tea shop was quiet. In the dark hallway leading to the single apartment upstairs Toy Sing, standing on an upper step, brushed her hands ever so lightly against the forehead of the now enamored young cop. He reached out for her, but was not quick enough. High above him sounded a light, amused laugh; a pellet of perfume struck him, spilling its delicious scent over his clothes. He started up. But a sharp whisper arrested him.

"Be careful, sir. Chin Wing Foo is a dangerous man!"

McMahon, stirred to his depths by the adventure, went blindly into the street, unconscious of a shuffling figure that covertly followed him quite to his residence.

It was one of Chin Wong Foo's spies.

The next evening Chin Wong Foo closed his tea shop early and retired to the work room in the immediate rear, a thoughtful savage look in his oblique eyes. Here, after carefully pinning the curtain to the side of the window, so that no light could escape, he lit a candle.

The place was toy-like in size and contained a curious admixture of broken bric-a-brac, red paper, bird cages, chop sticks, incense burners, back scratchers, and other curios. In one corner stood a teakwood cabinet with some writing materials on it, and three large books.

Chin Wong Foo set the light atop the desk, and after adjusting to the flat area of his face a quaint pair of huge horn spectacles he opened one of the formidable-looking books. Alongside of it he placed another, the latter being a Standard Dictionary. Then, with true Mongolian patience, albeit there was much bobbing of the head and mumbling of big words, Chin Wong Foo began

to read. The paragraph he pondered over ran as follows:

"Aconitin is the alkaloid obtained from the drug aconite. It is made by exhausting powdered root with alcohol by percolation, distilling off most of the alcohol and treating the residue with diluted sulphuric acid. The solution of the sulphate thus formed is concentrated and washed with stronger ether, which removes all oily matters. The process is completed by mixing the ethereal solutions and allowing them to evaporate. One four-hundredths of a grain of aconitin will kill a human being in three minutes. The poison is said to have been used by clever criminals who, having learned that it was soluble in alcohol, frequently concealed its presence in perfumes. So slight a quantity will disappear in from five to seven minutes, leaving no trace whatsoever."

At the end of an hour he finished the paragraph apparently to his satisfaction, for he sat back and stared gravely at the ornamentation of the desk. Presently he removed from his pocket a small circular pill box, a vial of sandalwood perfume, and a two-inch piece of copper tubing, about half the circumference of a lead pencil—this last was intended as a blow pipe, one end being curved down sharply and then given a gradual quarter-inch upward trend.

At the moment there came a tap at the door. Instantly Chin Wong Foo extinguished his candle, and with a tread surprisingly light, despite his great girth and waddling movement, walked to the window. This he raised slightly. Some hurried guttural words poured in with a rush of damp wind from the great lake. Chin Wong Foo listened calmly, and then handing the other a slip of paper and uttering a curt word of dismissal, he returned to his desk and relighted the candle.

Shortly thereafter, at the corner of Vine alley and Hemlock street, less than six blocks away, the tall figure of a man of heavy build inclined his head against the terrific and unseasonable wind and rain that bore upon him. He was garbed in the regulation police rubber coat and helmet and was swearing softly to himself. Glancing at his watch, he noted the hour to be 2:15 a. m., which meant that Patrolman McMahon was due in five minutes to report to the station.

Rendered uncomfortable by the ferocity of the storm, he swung open the door of the patrol box to gain a haven. Something white, stuck over the hook, caught his attention. It was apparently a bit of paper; the scent of sandalwood assailed his nostrils.

A glance down the alley apprised him that the young patrolman was regular on his beat. As McMahon came up the big man just had time to secretly thrust the note into his pocket.

"Hello, Dinnie," he exclaimed, putting his face close to the ear of his companion. "She's a bad night."

"She sure is, Captain," McMahon was almost compelled to yell to make himself heard.

"Anything stirrin'?"

The young patrolman shook his head negatively, dug out his watch with a hitch of his rubber coat, glanced at the time, and reported in.

"Nothin' but the wind, Captain Haggerty," he called as he started for the rest of his beat. "It blew down one of them chop suey signs on Michigan avenue."

Haggerty waited in the lee of the patrol box as the young man continued his rounds. After a few minutes he strode along the alley in the opposite direction. This soon brought him in front of an empty barber shop wherein there burned a powerful light. His sharp eyes scanned the orientally scented missive, and he grinned eloquently as he returned it to his pocket.

Five minutes later he stood before the building that contained the tea shop of Chin Wong Foo. A skulking Chinaman had trailed him. Both above and below it was dark. He entered the hallway at the side and tiptoed up the stairs. At the landing he paused, listening intently for some time; but no sound save the wild whip of the gale outside came to him.

Haggerty tried the door to the apartment. It opened and he passed in noiselessly, closing the door behind him. Upon the full-lunged man of the open the quick transition to the warm, sensuous closeness of the air inside at once had the effect of saturating his senses. He remained standing perfectly still, his eyes narrowed in an effort to penetrate the complete darkness, and his breath, thickened with the heat, coming in modified gasps.

Suddenly from nowhere in particular there came a whisper.

"That you, policeman?"

"I got your note," he returned softly.

He moved towards the sound, but he collided with a table, and stopped as a consequence.

"Dear big man," went on the whisper alluringly. "How sweet it will be to lie in your arms!"

It occurred to Haggerty that here was a game indeed, and he could afford to grin in the dark as he let himself down into the chair. The Chinese girl evidently thought he was McMahon.

"Have your fun, you little rascal!" he returned in a suppressed voice, trying to imitate Denny's tones.

Floating back to him came:

"Ah, yes! What fun!"

The police captain's impulse was to castigate himself for not having his flashlight with him; then recalling the fact that he was in the rôle of an impostor—playing the part of Dennis McMahon—the grin returned to his smug features.

"Say! You little almond-eyed beauty!" he called in a low, amorous voice. "Let's can the

comedy stuff. Come over here an' sit on my knee."

Either detecting, or thinking he detected, some movement near by, he made a series of energetic leaps about the room, reaching eagerly before him with powerful, scythe-like sweeps of his arms. But again he stumbled, and this time pitched to the floor. He rose and pressed on, his hands out, seeking contact with the elusive spirit that always just seemed out of his reach. His fingers invariably closed on air.

A teasing feminine laugh came to him from across the room.

"By God!" he swore. "You're a clever little cat."

Breathless he sank into a chair. The voice, continuing to laugh, appeared to draw nearer the baffled man. He decided to remain quiet, and see what would eventuate. Then, from almost before him, he heard in a vibrant whisper in feminine tones:

"Sit still!" it commanded. "Put your arms at your side."

The big man kept his position expectantly.

"You promise not to move," insisted the voice.

"I promise," returned Haggerty enchanted. "Anything, Toy Sing, for a kiss."

There sounded the low burble of a laugh.

"Are you ready?"

"Yes."

"Bend back your head a bit."

Haggerty, now entirely docile and sure that that course would avail him most, complied.

An instant later his lips were actually brushed by those of another. He laughed and started to speak. But a slight something struck his tongue. There was a tingle to it, followed by the tell-tale odor of sandalwood and aconite.

"Stop throwing that damn perfume," he complained.

He stood up.

"Come now, little girl," he begged in a low voice. "Let's have a hug."

But the mocking laugh came again. It was receding. The big police captain, with the quick annoyance of one accustomed to authority, lost patience at being thwarted. He started once more to pursue the haunting laugh, but suddenly stopped and put his hand to his heart. It felt as if it had been suddenly gripped in a vise. His senses began to reel. He staggered and fought for breath, to combat the dreadful sensation of lassitude stealing over him.

"In the name of God!" he moaned. "What is this!"

A tremor had thrilled its way through his system, to be followed at once by a convulsion, terrible and deadly, which twisted and contorted the poor human frame until the features writhed with the frightful agony of it.

Then, with the suddenness that accompanies a blow on the head, the poisoned man fell in his tracks. He was dead before he struck the thick nap of the taupe rug.

An instant later the room was filled with light, and Chin Wong Foo bent over his victim. Perhaps a flicker of the eyelids betrayed his disappointment when he beheld the body of a middle-aged policeman—a police captain instead of a young patrolman! But the indication, if such it was, proved fleeting. Habitual expressionlessness again descended upon the big waddling figure; his eyes were beady, devoid of the slightest trace of emotion as he turned away and drove his wife before him at the point of a dagger that compelled her to help deceive Haggerty.

Next morning the body of Captain Haggerty was discovered in his bachelor apartments. The look on the face of the corpse was ghastly, but there was not a mark to indicate the manner or cause of decease.

Meanwhile the body of Toy Sing lay in a long box weighted with pig iron at the bottom of the black waters in an evil-smelling creek that winds it way to the great lake.

Michigan and Cypress, on Michigan, to Chin Wong Foo's tea shop, to Cedar, and turn by Gene's Negro Chili Parlor through the alley to patrol box. Dennis McMahon with this order patrolled his beat through the long nights, and wondered frequently why it was that he never again glimpsed the petite figure of Toy Sing, who threw little pellets of sandalwood scent.

SERVANT'S DREAM REALIZED.

A servant in the kitchen of the Spanish Ambassador at Paris is going to have the fulfillment of her dream—She is going to see a performance at the Comedie Francaise, and in addition she has 500 francs cash to buy a new dress for the occasion.

It happened this way: Mme. Martha Brandes, former Secretary of the Comedie Francaise, lost a package containing pearls worth 200,000 francs she was taking to a jeweler's to have strung. She notified the police. That afternoon Mme. Maudit, on her way from the baker's with bread for the dinner of his Excellency, Quinones de Leon, found the pearls and took them to the nearest police station. They were recognized, and the finder was taken to the home of Mme. Brandes.

Mme. Brandes thanked the woman warmly and gave her 500 francs. Asked if she could do anything else for the Ambassador's servant, she received the reply that the finder of her pearls had dreamed for some years of going to the Comedie Francaise, but had never been able to do so. She would like two tickets. She received an order for them, and went on her way rejoicing, with the Ambassador's bread under her arm, a ticket for the theatre and 500 francs.

A Secret Service Case

By FRANK D. SMALL

"YES, young feller, Red Jim's camp is up there on the peak right enough, but whar on it I dunno, an' what's more, I fur one ain't mighty set on finding out."

Tom Walden turned to the group of men, rough, burly gold-seekers, who had accompanied the speaker and himself to the door of the ramshackle building that was courteously termed an "hotel" in the days of the silver strike in Colorado, but they seemed to avoid his eye. Walden was a pretty successful Secret Service detective in the East and had been sent to see if Red Jim was not responsible for a large number of spurious ten-dollar notes, which had been traced to the region where the notorious crook was holding forth.

Tom stared hopelessly around.

"Where's the sheriff of this district located, then? P'r'aps he might be induced to look after his business and at the same time help me."

A short laugh came from the group.

"Oh, the sheriff!" one of them said drawlingly. "Waal, guess Jim did the sheriff up some last month. He hadn't time to ap'int no deputy, I reckon, an' thar being no candidate pertickler set on the vacancy, guess the situation is still unoccupied."

Another laugh from the men followed this speech, and thus encouraged, the miner continued:

"Perhaps this yer young feller 'ud care to take on the position; if so, we'd ap'int him sheriff of this district quite right, and reg'lar, wouldn't we boys?"

A roar followed this witticism; evidently the speaker was the recognized local mirth-provoker.

"Thar's a thousand dollars reward out on Jim, alive or dead, yer know," he went on, "and that caused the downfall of our last legal representative—he sort er hankered after the filthy lucre. Waal, Jim got riled, an' met him in hyar one day; there was a rough house for a bit, 'cause the sheriff warn't no slouch with his gun, but Jim filled him up considerable with lead, an' departed triumphant to his camp on ther peak!"

"And I suppose none of you tried to stop him," sneered Tom, for the way these burly men seemed to knuckle under to this ruffian caused his sense of kicking against tyranny to overcome his usual coolheadedness, so necessary if one wished to live peaceably in that wild lawless region. "Surely one man against—how many?—a dozen, I suppose, had overpowering odds against him!"

The men stood silent for a few moments and then sullenly and almost menacingly retired back into the saloon without a word, all save one, who said before joining his companions:

"Easy, youngster; you've riled ther boys now, and apart from not helping yer, they'll probably turn nasty. Ye see, with Red Jim an' the sheriff pullin' their triggers 'bout as hard as they could, and a Mexican who is a pal of Jim's an' a dandy shooter also drawing an occasional bead on the hull b'iling crowd to keep 'em from chipping in the circus, you bet ther saloon was soon untenable!"

Walden turned moodily away and stared over at the great bare spur of the Rockies stretched out in front of him, the setting sun just gilding the top of each height, levelling the great patches of firs and pines on the sides into indescribable masses, weird and impressive.

Red Jim, the noted local "bad man," had held him up that very morning and relieved him of his belt containing the whole month's profits acquired at a claim in Leadville. After a long hot ride occupying all the morning he had dismounted from his pony and was enjoying a well-earned spell of rest whilst discussing his meal of "jerked" meat and crackers, his back against a convenient rock, and his legs dangling over a refreshing, clear-looking pool, when, happening to glance over his shoulder, to his astonishment he found himself looking into the deadly muzzle of a revolver, held by a rough-looking individual noticeably clad in a flaming red shirt. Tom's gasp of surprise caused the man to grin provokingly.

"Howdy, pard?" said he. "Guess I wouldn't move if I was you, not if I was wise!"

For a moment Tom's gape of bewilderment continued, then, as he realized what was happening, he made a clutch for his revolver; but that was lying a couple of yards away with the rest of his impedimenta.

"Waal, of all the durned tenderfoots I ever did see! But throw up yer hands, young man—throw 'em up quick, now." But Tom's hands were up; the man's voice was full of deadly menace, without a loophole for delay or argument.

"Now, then," the bandit continued, "turn yer back and keep yer hands up, fur when I takes that belt off'n yer, if yer moves any, I'll plug yer, sure!"

Tom didn't move. He was as brave as most fellows, and had been through many tight corners that had made even old, tried hands quail, but he knew better than to struggle against such odds as these; he must wait for a chance to get on more even terms with his assailant.

Red Jim's fame was well known to Tom. A noted desperado and gambler, he had killed a man in one of the mining camps he frequented and escaped to the woods, leaving several others more or less severely injured in a vain attempt to secure him on the part of the dead man's friends. After this he posed as a robber and "bad man,"

camping somewhere in the slopes of the adjacent Rockies, and sallying down terrorizing the district when he felt in the humor. "Red" Jim, he called himself, from the color of the hunting shirt he affected, and as it coincided well with his outrages, "Red" Jim he remained in the mouths of the inhabitants of that wild region. No one cared to take their life in their hands and discover "Red Jim's cache," and until the time when someone would put an end to the outlaw by getting in the first shot on one of his appearances, he practically did as he pleased. Now he was suspected of counterfeiting.

As Tom waited there with his back to the desperado all the man's wild deeds came vividly to his mind, and as he felt the cold muzzle of the pistol pressed against the nape of his neck he shuddered involuntarily and an icy tremor crept down his spine. Would Red Jim shoot him like a rat? Was he being held in play, to be eventually disposed of at leisure and his body hidden away under a pile of rocks? No one would hear of him again; he would simply disappear in that wild, deserted region. Better put up a fight if he could and get the finish over as soon as possible. The belt suddenly fell from his waist, and as it did so Tom, with the desperation of a doomed man, turned sharp round, striking out with his fist at the same time. A stunning crash, and a red-hot iron seemed to sear his scalp; he fell sideways on the stones, half in and half out of the water of the pool. He gazed up at the savage face glaring into his through a haze of smoke, and then green mists seemed to swallow him up. The man looked down at him for a moment, and then turning on his heel, said unconcernedly, "Dead, I reckon." Carefully placing another cartridge in the chamber of his revolver, he returned it to his holster, and after picking up Tom's weapon and unpacking his blanket from the pony's back, set off down the trail with the belt buckled over his own, and disappeared as quickly as he had come.

The detective moved uneasily. What was that fearful pain in his head? He felt icy cold. Shudderingly he stretched out his arms, and one of his knuckles hit against a rock; that aroused him somewhat, and he sat up. As he did so a wave of racking toothache seemed to almost shrivel up his face. With a moan of agony he staggered to his feet and tried to realize his position. He felt his head—ah! that was the cause of the trouble; he could feel a furrow of skin torn up right across one side of his scalp, and his head was covered with clotted blood and hair. He remembered he had heard old hands say what fearful neuralgia usually accompanied head wounds, and he felt miserably sick and ill. Dragging himself up on to the rock above the pool where he had been first sitting, the Secret Service man lay still for some little time. He felt so tired, and the sun was gradually warming his wet, chilled body—perhaps the sun would cure his aching, throbbing head; yes, he would rest a little; by-and-by he would——

Tom woke with a start and gazed confusedly around—his head felt better, and the faceache had passed off. Tenderly feeling his scalp, he descended to the pool and bathed his throbbing temples in its cooling water. After thoroughly washing the blood from out of his head he started to take notice of his surroundings, and gradually the recent events came back to him. The man who had shot him had evidently gone; he must have taken the blanket with him from the horse's back, for it had disappeared, and his automatic had gone, too. Then, with a groan, Tom realized his full loss—where was his belt with the dust and nuggets of gold? Taken from him! Yes, he had been robbed. He would not go back empty handed; he would make an effort to hunt down Red, discover his haunt, wrest back his property, and make him pay dearly for it into the bargain—or go under himself. He felt better now; he would make his way into the miners' shanty that he had originally intended to reach that afternoon. There, perhaps, he could get help, and they would know more about Red Jim's movements and where he was likely to be found than himself.

Mounting his broncho, the detective resumed his journey down the trail. His sure-footed pony picked its way with almost the nicety of a lady over the rock-strewn track. Down the gorge they went, through the valley, across the stream and up again, one moment passing along the brow of a huge canyon and the next descending to the level of the rushing watercourse. At last there was the end of his journey, crowded on one side of the huge rock that seemed to erect a projecting mass of cliff against the sky and keep the elements from completely blowing the rude structure away. Already as Tom dismounted the flickering light of an oil-lamp gleamed weakly from its tiny window, and the reek of an oil stove issued villainously as he opened the door. About a dozen men were grouped round the stove playing poker; they looked up and nodded as he entered, for he was known to them a little. "Hit yer head, ain't yer, kid?" inquired one of the men. "Guess you've been finding trouble on the trail way back?"

Tom sat heavily down on a box as far away from the fumes of the stove as he could get and asked for whisky. He still felt rather sick from the effects of the shot and gulped down the fiery stuff amidst smiles from the men, and then plumped into a narration of what had happened. The men became keenly interested when they heard of the theft of his belt; they knew what Tom was feeling—one day to be fairly rich and the next to be practically broke—and they plied him with questions, especially a Mexican, who interposed shrill ejaculations of interest as the tale proceeded. But although it aroused their sympathy, the idea of aiding Tom to tackle the outlaw did not appeal to them, and after the heated conversation already referred to Tom was left outside the door of the saloon pondering ruefully on what he was to do.

As he slowly turned to re-enter the hut, several of the men were bending over a paper that was being laboriously inscribed by one of the party, and they looked up with grins as Tom appeared. Then one of them advanced with the paper in his hand.

"Take hold, pard, this is your nomination, set down all reg'lar an' proper; we empower you to act as sheriff to this hyar district; an' now, as you are in loco, you can jest git that Red Jim rounded up. That's yer first duty, 'specially as the outrage was committed on yer own person!"

A perfect guffaw burst from the assembled gang; they were not really an ill-natured set of men, but Tom's criticism of their conduct was rankling in their minds, and they thought it a huge joke to give the stranger a task that the biggest amongst them would quail at tackling single-handed.

Walden drew himself up to his full height; he had made up his mind in an instant to accept their joke in grim earnest.

"Thank you, boys," he said in quiet tones; "I guess I'll do my best to fill the job you have given me." He went to the door, then turned on them and cried, "I'm going right now to bring in Red Jim, alive or dead!" And then he went out into the darkness, leaving the men gazing rather shamefacedly at each other.

"The young fool! guess he won't be so cock-a-hoopy when he comes across Jim," hissed the Mexican, who was one of the toughest of the gang.

"I dunno," put in another. "He's a tough guy an' I guess he meant what he said when he went out jest now."

Several of the men acquiesced, and the Mexican, with a surly look, left his place by the stove, and, seizing his sombrero, followed Tom out into the ravine.

"Hullo!" exclaimed one of the men around the stove. "What's the greaser after, I wonder? It was he who put Jim on to the sheriff before. Say, boys, I think we'll take a hand in this hyar game after all. Let's follow ther greaser, an' see what his idea is, eh?"

A hum of approval came from the men; their instincts of fair play and Tom's manly attitude had their sympathy at last, and one and all they trooped out at the door at the heels of the last speaker.

The detective crouched behind a sheltering mass of rock and shivered; it was bitterly cold. He had painfully toiled up and up the side of the peak for hours; but, tired as he was, he still kept his purpose uppermost in his mind—to find Red Jim's lair. The slope had now become very steep, almost perpendicular in parts, and he was taking a short rest to recover his breath after a particularly arduous bit of climbing. Just as he was about to continue his survey, a stone suddenly tinkled down near him, then another and another. "I'm being tracked," thought Tom, and even as it crossed his mind a figure went past, almost touching the rock by which he was crouching. It seemed to take an upward direction without faltering, as if familiar with the surroundings. Who could it be? Red Jim? No, that wasn't Red Jim's form; that was a smaller man than the outlaw, and wearing a huge hat. Ah, that Mexican at the saloon, probably the friend of Red Jim's who figured in the fight with the sheriff. Going to put him on his guard. These thoughts flashed into the Secret Service man's mind as he stealthily crept after the moving form hardly discernible in the blackness. An occasional stone fell near Tom, and now and then a rush of small stones and sand would rain round his head and sting his eyes; but he never let the man he was tracking know of his presence.

Relentlessly, silently the boy crept on, every foot, he judged, bringing them nearer to Red Jim's camp, somewhere in the blackness above them. Twice the man halted and seemed to listen, once giving a shrill whistle and then continuing his way again. At last they seemed to strike the rough course of a small rivulet that threaded its way down into the blackness, and as Walden mechanically followed the shuffling sound in front of him up its rather slippery course, a voice stabbed the silence from somewhere above with a suddenness that made his heart give a jerk into his throat.

"Stop! Who's that?" it cried with a world of deadly meaning in the tone. Tom knew that voice; it was Red Jim's.

"It is all right, Senor," came the answer, not two yards in front of him. "It is but I, Miguel Carrera, an' I come to warn you of danger."

"Danger here?" came the voice of the first speaker. "Come up onto the ledge, and show yourself, and you can tell me more; but if you are lying and thar's more than one of you, it'll be yer last outing."

A scrambling sound followed, and Walden judged that the Mexican had at last joined Red Jim.

Suddenly a gleam of light shot from above his head, and from the shadow in which he was happily enveloped he saw the face of the bandit glaring down into the darkness in search of possible treachery. The light showed to the detective's eager gaze a dark slit in the side of the cliff about a dozen yards above his head. The light went out as suddenly as it had come, but Tom had seen enough; Red Jim's holdout it was, sure enough.

Steadying himself against the wall of rock, and holding on firmly to a friendly projection, he rapidly thought out a plan of action. "If I go in on them now," he thought, "they'd shoot me before I had a chance to get at them; better wait a bit." His hand went to his belt. Pah! what a fool he was; tenderfoot they called him—tenderfoot, indeed, he felt himself to be. He had forgotten that Red Jim had taken his pistol as well as his belt at their last meeting, and he was weaponless. What on earth should he do now, perched on a shelf of rock within a few yards of two men, who would stick at nothing and not hesitate to murder him directly they discovered his presence?

Several hasty plans flashed through his mind, and were as quickly discarded as being too risky; but his conjectures were cut short by an angry burst of wrangling voices that issued from the interior of the cleft.

"Up," said Red Jim shortly. "I must provide agin that goldarned new sheriff popping in on me an' becoming nasty. Guess I was a fool not to have made sure of him yesterday; unless all you've told me's a lie!"

"By all the saints, Jim," said the greaser, "it's true, and there is no time to lose. We can see him now if he is on the peak, and can drop him into the valley without any trouble."

Red Jim peered down the side of the cliff, turning his back to the other, when Tom saw the treacherous Mexican place a rifle full against Red Jim's stooping back and fire! Without a cry, the outlaw seemed to double up and fall an inert mass almost over the edge of the shelf of rock, and Walden, with a shudder of horror, rose from his hiding-place. The murderer pounced upon the body like a hawk, and strove to unfasten a belt that was buckled around Red Jim's waist, not seeing Tom's involuntary movement.

"Not on him," muttered the man, and, rising, he disappeared into the cave.

Springing from his hiding-place, the detective snatched the weapon from the dead man's waist. As he did so the eyes of the Mexican glared murderously from the cave into his own.

A flash! and Tom felt the wind of a bullet on his cheek; another followed, which missed also, then the murderer was on him. The officer sprang on one side, retreating up the ledge, aiming his newly acquired pistol. The Mexican was holding the precious belt in one hand, which was the probable cause of his failing to hit the boy, while with his other he held his smoking rifle. Only a few feet separated the two, and for a moment each glared at the other across the dead man who lay between. Then the Mexican, with a curse, stepped back to take sure aim; but the detective, with the quickness of a hawk, stooped down and clutched his weapon again, firing upwards at his aggressor the moment his hand encircled the butt.

There was an answering crash as the rifle spoke, but the bullet went wide, chipping the face of the cliff far above their heads. Tom was unhurt, but the Mexican was swaying on the ledge, making desperate attempts to maintain his balance.

The detective hesitated for one moment, but the look in the man's eyes was enough. If he righted himself Walden could expect nothing but a prolonged and desperate struggle on that fearful height, so with a quick, catching breath he fired again straight at the swaying figure. With a horrible cry of agony and hopelessness, the Mexican made a desperate effort to right himself, and then disappeared from the ledge, toppling backwards into the depths.

Tom gazed at the spot which a moment before had been tenanted, and then, feeling sick and faint, stooped and picked up the precious belt. It had not been tampered with; the contents were intact. An examination showed Walden that the belt was filled with the same sort of counterfeit bills he had been tracing.

"Guess I've reached the end of the trail," he reflected. "Now to search Red's den."

He passed into a small natural cave and found a complete outfit for making phoney money, and a quantity of the bad bills.

Going back to Silver Strike, the officer telegraphed to Washington a report of his find and a couple of detectives were rushed to his aid from Denver.

They got photographs of Red Jim and the greaser, packed up the money belt and spurious banknote outfit, and all the evidence was sent east. Then Walden brought the two dead men to the saloon in a wagon and as the gang of miners gathered round he laid his sheriff's shield on the bar.

"Boys, I'm through," he said to his acquaintances. "You elected me sheriff to run down Red Jim, and I've done it. That finishes my job here so I'm going east on the next train."

They were astonished at his success and began to admire his pluck, but could not induce him to remain. So Walden boarded the express and sped away, leaving a regretful crowd behind him.

TROUT GREW EIGHT INCHES IN FORTY-NINE WEEKS

THE question so often asked when a fisherman has conquered his pound, or two-pound trout, "How old is he?" finds an answer in Capron's pharmacy:

"The big speckled trout that makes his home in the window aquarium at Capron's pharmacy finds many admirers these days when the trout fishing season is near at hand," says the Evening Telegram of Malone, N. Y. "The trout furnishes an interesting illustration of the remarkable growth possible with this most prized fish.

"On the first day of the open season for trout last year, early in April, this trout was caught by Mr. Capron while fishing in Salmon River. The trout, when hooked, was just within the statutory limit, being exactly six inches in length. He was not badly injured by the hook when caught, and was at once placed in the window tank at Mr. Capron's store and given every possible care and attention.

"The trout thrived from the first, and has now attained a length of fourteen inches, and a weight of upward of one and one-half pounds. This remarkable gain has been made in a period of about forty-nine weeks, or three weeks less than one year. The trout is a perfect specimen of its species, with brilliantly marked spots and all the good points which the brook trout possesses."

The Carved Cobra

By HARRY C. BARTON

"I SAY, what a splendid model it is, Ogilvie!" exclaimed Douglas Massey. "Life size, too, and the markings of the body exact, so far as my knowledge of these reptiles go. Carved out of wood—teak, isn't it?"

He was examining the carved figure of a hooded cobra, and a more perfect representation of one of those venomous reptiles it would have been hard to find. It was life size, as Massey had said, correctly colored, and so perfectly marked that one might have supposed the skin of a dead snake had been fastened over the wood. In such a position, with the upper part of the sinuous body raised from the coils and the flattened head slightly bent forward, the reptile had the appearance of being about to strike a victim with its poison fangs.

"Probably carved out of teak wood," replied Ogilvie. "Yes, it is a perfect model. Seems to show that there was some truth in the yarn told us by the Hindu Yogi. I had an idea at the time that he wasn't lying to me, for a wonder, and—well, that is why we are here."

Massey was the son of a tea-planter in Ceylon, but was in the Deccan on a visit to a friend who was surveying in the Shivauri Hills. There he had met Captain Ogilvie, of the Indian police, who had suggested a week's shooting in a bit of country which had not been spoilt by the intrusion of the "gilt-edged sportsman." Douglas jumped at the offer, but his friend was unable to get the time off, so he and Ogilvie started with a native shikari named Bhagwan and a pack mule, with their camp equipage.

They had reached the edge of what Ogilvie called the "game country," and had camped for the night, when a Hindu Yogi—a holy man—put in an appearance, and, after the customary salutations, told them a story which Douglas at first discredited.

Three days' journey farther on to the northwest, he had stated, there was a great fortress, which had been built by some rajah of a past age, and was still in an excellent state of preservation. The peculiarity about this fort was that it was now almost covered up with sand, so that only the battlements could be seen above the ground. It was, however, habitable, and was tenanted by men whom the Yogi described as snake-worshippers. These men, he declared, had a prisoner, a white man—though why the mysterious snake-worshippers had burdened themselves with a captive he was quite unable to state. He had learned all this from a charcoal burner, who kept the snake-worshippers supplied with fuel, and who swore that he had seen the white prisoner.

When the Hindu Yogi had taken his departure, Ogilvie expressed his intention of going in search of this buried fortress and its strange tenants. Douglas was astonished. "Why, do you believe the yarn?" he exclaimed.

"I believe there is such a fort," Ogilvie had replied, "because I have heard vague rumors of its existence before. As to the snake-worshippers—well, there are stranger religions than that in India, with rites such as I would not venture to describe publicly, for fear of being branded as a liar. India is a British possession, but we know little more about its people now than we did a hundred years ago. There is not more than one white man in a million who has a thorough insight into the dark byways of native life. The broad roads are open to all men's view."

It was because Douglass Massey believed that Ogilvie was the one man in a million in his intimate knowledge of native character and thought that he so readily agreed to abandon the shooting in order to search for the hidden fortress and its possible inmates. If, in truth, there was a European imprisoned within its walls, it was clearly their duty to rescue him if possible.

In any case, Douglas reflected, there was the prospect of an adventure which might amply compensate them for the loss of a few head of game, which, after all, had not yet been shot.

And it was on the third day, when they ought to have been in the neighborhood of the fort, if the Yogi had given them the correct direction, that Ogilvie had discovered the carved snake in a sort of shrine in the heart of a grove of areca trees. He had brought it to the camp in order to show it to Douglas, intending to return it to the place where he had found it; but events happened which prevented him from carrying this intention into effect.

In the first place there came on that evening one of those sudden and violent storms which are a prelude to the breaking of the monsoons. It did not last very long, but by the time it was over darkness had set in, and Ogilvie decided that it was not good enough to tramp through a rain-sodden jungle, infested with poisonous reptiles, in order to restore the snake god—it was presumably an object of worship—to its shrine.

"It can remain in our tent for the night," he said, "and I will take it back at daybreak."

Douglas now regarded the thing with some disfavor. "If I wake up and see that beastly image glowering at me," he replied, "I shall fancy it is alive. It will disturb my night's rest. Why not put it outside?"

"In this country," observed Ogilvie, "it isn't advisable to give too much rein to your imagination. Besides, there is another reason why it will

be better to keep the 'graven image' inside the tent."

But he did not give the reason, and as he was a peculiarly reticent individual Douglas did not press him for it.

They had supper, yarned for half an hour or so, and then tucked themselves up in their camp beds. The rain had cooled the atmosphere considerably, and they were glad enough that they had rugs with them. Blankets and sheets they had not burdened themselves with.

Douglas soon fell asleep, for he was pretty well tired out after a long day's ride through a difficult country. By the light of the lantern fixed to the tent pole, the last thing that he saw before he closed his eyes was the carved image of the snake against the tent side, about three feet away from the end of his bed.

And when he awoke suddenly about an hour after midnight—he found out the time afterwards—the first thing he saw was the hooded cobra. But its position was changed. It was on his bed now!

Douglas rubbed his eyes and stared. Had Ogilvie been playing a trick on him? It was quite unlike his companion to do such a thing. He was not given to playing practical jokes. Douglas rubbed his eyes again and raised his head from the pillow. Was he dreaming? He was certain that the head of the reptile moved! It was swaying gently from side to side! The sinuous body was rising higher from its coils.

"Great Scott! The thing has come to life!" he cried in horror.

He did not dare to move, for he knew that when a cobra struck it meant certain death to the victim. The only living thing that can survive the bite of these venomous reptiles is the mongoose.

He looked towards the spot where the carved image had been. It was no longer there! This seemed to add a fresh horror to the situation. It became uncanny. Reason told him that it was impossible that a piece of carved wood could come to life, but there are times when it is not easy to pay heed to the promptings of reason and cold common sense. The fact remained that in place of the image there was a living snake, exactly similar to the model in all respects.

"Ogilvie," he whispered.

His friend would know how to deal with this reptile if he could only rouse him in time. He was a very light sleeper, but he did not answer to the call. Then it suddenly dawned on Douglas that he could not hear him breathing. Was it possible that the cobra had already secured one victim? The thought was too horrible.

Douglas turned his head very, very slowly, until he was able to see his friend's bed. It was empty! Ogilvie was not in the tent.

For a few seconds Douglas lay there, utterly incapable of anything like rational thought. What had become of Ogilvie? What was the meaning of the whole hideous nightmare? Cold sweat stood upon his face in beads. He scarcely dared to breathe, for he knew that the slightest movement of his body might cause the hideous reptile to dart forward and strike.

At the outside only a few minutes could have passed since he awoke, but it seemed like an eternity of time. And the worst of it was he could do nothing. He was absolutely helpless, for the coils of the snake's body were on his legs. To shout for help would be but to precipitate his fate, even supposing that Ogilvie or the shikari were within hearing; and there was no certainty of that.

There was nothing for it but to remain perfectly still and hope for the best—the "best" being anything that might happen to divert the cobra from making an attack. But whatever it was would have to happen very quickly.

It was at this moment that, chancing to glance towards the tent door, he saw a hand grasping a revolver cautiously thrust through the opening. He guessed it was Ogilvie's hand. There were a few seconds of terrible suspense while the revolver steadied. If he missed——

A flash and a loud report, the sudden leaping up of the cobra, and then the falling of its body across the rug, with the head shattered by a bullet. The danger was over, but with the reaction Douglas felt almost as limp as the dead reptile. Ogilvie entered the tent.

"A near thing," he said quietly. "Here, take a pull out of my flask. I don't believe in spirit drinking in this country, but sometimes a dose or more of brandy and water is an absolute necessity."

"Thanks." Douglas took a few sips, and felt better for it. He flung the bedclothes aside and rose to his feet. "I don't know how that beastly thing got in here, nor what has become of the other, the carved reptile. In fact, there are a lot of things I don't understand. Where have you been, Ogilvie?"

"Over to the buried fortress," was the reply.

"What! Are we close to it, then?"

"Barely a mile away," pursued Ogilvie. "I was restless, couldn't sleep properly, so I got up and decided that I might as well spend an hour or so in trying to locate the place. Best to do the reconnoitring at night. Well, I found it. It looks like a huge mound of sand with an outcrop of bits of rock. The bits of rock are really the stone battlements, broken in places. The Yogi's description was correct. His whole story was correct, in fact."

"Eh? Do you mean that there is really a white prisoner in the power of these mysterious snake-worshippers?"

"Yes. I crept close up to the battlements. There is an entrance to the interior of the old fort on the top of the mound. I heard a man cry out in the Tamil dialect: "You dogs! set me at liberty and I will fight you all single-handed. Let me die that way if you are men!" He spoke Tamil as a European would, not like a native. His appeal was received with jeers. Then I heard a door

close and a bolt shot into its socket. We can open that door, Massey. Do you feel fit? We must start at once if we are to save this captive, whoever he is."

"I'm ready," answered Douglas, buckling his revolver belt around his waist. "But they must know we are here. That cobra——"

"One of them knew," interrupted Ogilvie with a curious emphasis on the last word. "He was on the track of the snake-god, and, having secured it, thrust the live cobra into the tent by way of revenge. Poor Bhagwan, our shikari, may have roused up and caught the fellow in the act. That sealed his fate."

"Has he been murdered?" gasped Douglas.

"Stabbed," replied Ogilvie. "On my way back I met his murderer, though of course I did not know then what had happened. The fellow was naked, save for a loin cloth, and he was as evil-looking a brute as ever I have clapped eyes on. He was carrying the snake image, which he flung down and then came at me with a knife. I caught his wrist and put a jiu-jitsu trick into practice. In two seconds he was on the ground. Somehow he fell on the point of his knife, so we have one less to reckon with. The others may not know that we are here."

Douglas had heard enough, and was eager to start on what was likely to prove a desperate adventure. Outside he saw something lying on the ground covered with a rug. It was the body of their unfortunate shikari. The sight set the blood tingling in his veins with an almost savage desire for vengeance.

Ogilvie led the way direct, merely cautioning Douglas to tread as lightly and noiselessly as possible. There was no need, he declared, to keep to cover, as the snake-worshippers had no sentries or watchmen outside the fort, and the probability was that at that hour of the morning the majority of them would be asleep.

In a quarter of an hour from the time of quitting the tent they were climbing the huge sand mound beneath which was hidden the old-time fortress. A light streamed from the summit up into the darkness of the night.

They stepped over some rubble of stones, where a part of the battlement had crumbled up, and made straight for an opening which at one time had been an outlet to the roof of the fort. A long flight of stone steps led downwards, terminating in a passage. From the farther end of this passage came a curious wailing chant. Some of the snake-worshippers were awake, at all events.

"I have come across followers of various degraded forms of worship in my time," whispered Ogilvie, "and I know pretty well what that singsong chant means. It usually precedes a sacrifice—a human sacrifice. Is your revolver handy?"

"Yes."

"Don't hesitate to use it if you find it necessary, mind. We don't know how many of these devils there are, and I don't want to fight the whole nest of them if it can be avoided."

Still leading, he descended the stairs, and reached the passage, with Douglas about a yard behind him. There were four doors opening out of this passage, two on each side. Ogilvie pointed to the second one on the right, that being the only one with the bolts on the outside. It was the one, therefore, behind which they were most likely to find the prisoner.

The wild, harsh chant still continued, the sounds emanating from a lower chamber, where it is possible the sacrificial ceremonies and other horrible rites were carried out. That chamber, however, was a place to be avoided, unless the captive had already been taken down there, and it occurred to Douglas that if they had to seek him down in that lower region, where it appeared that a number of the snake-worshippers were already assembled, seemingly very wide awake, there would be but a small chance of any of them—the white men, that is—seeing daylight again.

Ogilvie was, as already stated, a yard ahead of Douglas. He had just passed the first door, and Douglas was almost level with it, when it was softly opened and a man's face—a native's—looked out. Douglas slipped his revolver into his left hand, and then, without a second's hesitation, struck at the fellow with all the strength of his muscular right arm. He dropped like an ox that has been poleaxed, but he managed to let out a yell as his senses left him that must have been heard from roof to basement of the building.

Ogilvie turned sharply and saw what had happened. "A bit of bad luck," he muttered. "We shall have to fight now."

He sprang to the last door and shot back the bolts. "Go inside," he called to Douglas, "and see if the captive is there. I'll stop here. I'm a better shot than you with a revolver."

There were shouts and cries of alarm from below, and the sounds of hurrying footsteps on the lower flight of stairs. Men were coming up to find out what was the matter, and Douglas would have preferred to take his stand by Ogilvie to meet the attack which would most certainly be made; but he knew the value of implicit obedience to an order in any crisis, so he entered the room at once.

By the light which filtered in from the outside he saw a man lying on the floor—a white man, hollow-cheeked, dirty, and unkempt, and in a dreadful state from neglect and confinement in a room where daylight never reached. His wrists and ankles were bound with ropes. He stared at Douglas, then gave a cry of joy.

"A countryman!" he exclaimed. "Thank heaven! you have come to rescue me. There are others with you, I suppose?"

"One," replied Douglas, as he slashed away at the poor fellow's bonds with his knife.

"Only one!" exclaimed the prisoner. "And there are fifty of these murderous hounds in this place——"

"Forty-eight," Douglas corrected him.

As he spoke, Ogilvie's revolver rang out, and

again and again. Three shots, and a cry or shriek following each.

"Forty-five now," added Douglas. "Come, we shall soon reduce the odds. Ogilvie is at the top of a narrow flight of stairs, so he has the advantage of position. Now, do you think you can walk? No, your limbs are too stiff. I must help you along. Come to my left side; I want my right hand free, for I may have to use my revolver."

In that way they went out into the passage. The snake-worshippers were still crowding on the stairs, but they kept out of sight below the level of the floor and out of the way of that death-dealing pistol. There was a clamor of voices, and Ogilvie said they were contemplating another rush.

"But it won't take place," he added.

There was a barrel of flour, weighing, perhaps, a hundredweight and a half, standing in the passage. Ogilvie turned it over, gave it a push, and it rolled to the stairhead, paused for a moment at the edge, and then toppled over right on to the crowd of men. A very pandemonium of howls, yells, screams, and curses rose up from below. The barrel of flour, plunging downwards, swept the stairs clean of the snake-worshippers.

"Time to go now," said Ogilvie coolly.

They went, helping the released captive between them. There was no pursuit, and they reached their camp in safety. But they did not remain there long. There was a sad office to perform, the burying of poor Bhagwan, whose death had been amply avenged. Then they rode back upon the road for the nearest town, where there were European residents.

At the hotel in Nagaspur they heard the ex-captive's story. His name was Wilson, and he was engaged, it appeared, in making a search about that part of the country for ancient ruins on behalf of an antiquarian society. He discovered the buried fortress and entered it, not having seen any natives in the vicinity. The result was he was captured by the snake-worshippers, and had been in their hands a fortnight when he was rescued by Ogilvie and Douglas Massey.

It may be that his captors were afraid to release him, knowing that if they did so unwelcome attention would be drawn to their queer stronghold, inquiries would be set on foot, and that the police would be likely to make things particularly unpleasant for them.

What had become of his servants Wilson had not the remotest idea, but it is probable that, scenting danger, they had cleared out hurriedly and returned to their homes, and, native-like, said nothing about the mysterious disappearance of their master.

The buried fortress stills remains in an excellent state of preservation, but the snake-worshippers have vanished.

MINUTEST MEASURE FOR BIGGEST OBJECT

STRANGE as it may seem, the largest object ever measured was scaled off with the minutest of measures known to science, and it but adds to the paradox to state that the measurement, while the most stupendous ever undertaken, was at the same time the most infinitesimal, says the Scientific American Monthly. The object, which was the star Betelgeuz in the constellation of Orion, turned out to be some three hundred million miles in diameter and the unit of measurement employed was half a wave-length of light.

Now, to the vast majority of us a hundred million miles conveys little meaning and a wave-length of light even less. Nor does it help us much to be told that the average solar light wave measures about 0.00002 inch in length. This length is so infinitely small that we cannot begin to visualize it. In former days a hair's breadth was rated as the very acme of tenuity. It is a very fine human hair that measures two one-thousandths of an inch in thickness. Now, take that hair and split it into a hundred slivers, and we shall find that each sliver is equal in thickness to the length of a single wave of light. In other words, a ray of light makes one hundred vibrations in traversing a space of the breadth of a fine hair, and when we consider that the ray is traveling at a rate of 186,000 miles per second, we must admit that the frequency of these vibrations far surpasses our powers of conception.

However, at present we have to deal, not with the frequency of the oscillations, but with their length. In fact, it is only half a wave-length that is used as our unit of measure; in other words, the one-hundredth part of half a hair's breadth.

Of course it was not the actual diameter of Betelgeuz that was measured, but the minute angle formed between two rays starting from opposite sides of the great star and coming together in our telescope. The angle worked out to forty-five one-thousandths of a second of arc; in other words, the rays are so nearly parallel that they would not show a spread of a hair's breadth in 250 yards, and we should have to travel back along the rays for a distance of over seventy miles before we should reach a separation of one inch.

Of course the farther we trace these rays, the greater the separation until eventually we arrive at their source, where of course their separation equals the diameter of the star. Hence, if we know the distance of the star from our telescope, we can determine its size.

Unfortunately Betelgeuz is so remote from us that it is exceedingly difficult to measure its distance with any degree of accuracy. According to the latest estimates, it is probably well over 200 light years distant from us and its diameter must therefore be about 350 times that of the sun.

She Fooled The Detective

By A SECRET SERVICE MAN

WILLIAM E. BROCKWAY was the most notorious counterfeiter of modern times, and has been very successful for fully thirty years; but during that time he had twice been arrested, tried, convicted, and served two terms of imprisonment.

He was in Chicago during Jim Doyle's trial. He was a fly "queer" worker and a member of the gang.

Brockway was arrested in the fall for counterfeiting United States bonds, but he made terms with "the powers that be," and upon his surrendering his plates and tools he was liberated under a suspended sentence.

Foster makes his home at Colorado Springs, and was in Chicago most of the time, while his wife was living in Kewanee, Illinos. Detectives were watching him all summer, and were pretty well posted as to what he was up to.

Foster joined Brockway and Lew Martin in Brooklyn in September.

All these fellows only work "big jobs." They won't have anything to do with small "put-ups," and they are the most cunning of all "fly workers" of whom the service has any knowledge.

Foster is a brother-in-law of Jim Doyle, who was caught in October and sentenced to twelve years in the Chester Penitentiary. That man really had two hundred and four thousand dollars in United States bonds on his person when they "pinched" him.

It is of a man called Jed Bronson, who was at one time the engraver for the gang, that I am a-going to relate a little story.

Our agency was hot on the trail of the gang, and our investigations developed the fact that Jed Bronson was at work for the gang in England; that is to say, he did the engraving there, and the counterfeit government bonds, which he made a specialty of, were struck off across the water and smuggled to the gang in this country in a way we could not detect.

I was detailed to cross the pond and track Mr. Bronson down. It was my object to secure his plates, as well as himself, as without them his conviction, backed as he was by money, would be an exceedingly difficult matter.

I arrived in Liverpool in May, and proceeded to London, where I hoped to strike the trail, as a letter from Bronson, which had fallen into our hands before I left America, bore the London post-mark.

I spent four weeks in a fruitless search of the British metropolis, aided by an expert from Scotland Yard.

Finally I made up my mind that the bird had flown, and I determined to seek him elsewhere.

But where?

This question puzzled me.

I was in the predicament of a man who is searching for a needle in a haystack, and I had not the slightest clue to direct my further quest.

Just at this time I received the very pointer I most wanted.

This came in the shape of a cablegram from New York and informed me that the department had just intercepted another letter from Bronson, which was post-marked "Clenning, Berkshire, England."

Clenning was a place I had never heard of, but I soon found out that it was a small town in an agricultural district.

Just the place, secluded and seldom visited by travelers, which an astute rascal would be likely to select for his abode, when engaged in such work as I suspected Mr. Bronson of.

You may be sure I did not waste any more time in London. The very day I received the New York cablegram I was en route for Clenning. I reached the town at midday, and I was impressed with the beauty of the country round about the little sleepy town, so far from the bustle and strife of the busy cities, that it seemed like another world.

The dwellings were old, and of a fashion to be found in none save the more ancient of England's country villages.

The only public house was an ancient "inn," which had stood since the days of the dashing gentry of the King's Highway; and as I arrived before it, and glanced up at the faded sign of a portly personage with an exceedingly rubicund face, which was supposed to be a representation of a former proprietor of the ancient hostelry, and, noting the watering-trough under the sign before the tap-door, I could not help thinking that only a dashing horseman like Claude Duval, Dick Turpin, or some other gallant robber, was wanting to complete the picture. Just at that moment I should have thought it exceedingly proper if one of the old-time knights of the road had ridden up and watered his horse before the door of "The King's Own," as the inn was christened.

But no jolly highwayman appeared. The door of the house opened, and a portly personage, who announced himself as Peter Hetrick, the host of the King's Own, escorted me into the hostelry. I had provided myself with a couple of sample cases, such as commercial travelers in the notion line carry, and this was the character which I had chosen to represent on this occasion. I had a juicy steak and a pint of old ale, and was smoking a cigar in the tap-room, gossiping with my

somewhat talkative host, in the hope of picking up some information regarding the business which had brought me to Clenning, when my assistant, the officer from Scotland Yard, came in.

When we left London—as we did in company, though I didn't say so—we agreed not to seem acquainted when we reached our destination.

Bradwood was attired as a country merchant, and he represented himself as a wool buyer. Gentlemen who followed the occupation of purchasing what prompts the shearing of the sheep were wont to make a pilgrimage to this part of the country at this time each year, as Mr. Bradwood had informed himself.

That afternoon we took a walk about the place, and shadowed the post-office when the mail came in, but no man answering the description of Bronson was seen, though a very pretty little woman, as plump as a partridge, and with a pair of as bright eyes and rosy cheeks as ever made a man's heart thump, visited the post-office.

As she passed Bradwood and myself she favored us with a close scrutiny, and we congratulated ourselves that our distinguished appearance had impressed this fair country damsel.

"A very pretty girl," said Bradwood to me in a voice which must have reached the pretty girl's ears, for she turned quickly and bestowed upon us a ravishing smile, while at the same time she blushed modestly and tripped away.

"She is charming—a perfect Hebe; and were I a single man, I should make her acquaintance before I shook the dust of Clenning from my feet," said Bradwood.

It chanced that, at the date of which I am speaking, I was a bachelor, jolly and gay. I therefore mentally resolved that I would see more of our divinity of the post-office ere I quitted the village.

That evening Bradwood and I conversed about our detective work and laid our plans for the next day.

We occupied the back parlor, and several times heard the heavy tread of the landlord as he passed the door.

Next morning after breakfast, which I took before Bradwood was out of bed, as I stepped out of the inn with my cigar in my mouth, for a walk and a smoke, Peter Hetrick, mine host, followed me.

"Hi wants to tell 'e suthin', sir. Hi begs yer honor's parding, but Hi overheard the t'other gent call yer a hofficer, and Hi's got some'at on me mind," he said, raising his hand.

"I think you have long ears, Mr. Hetrick," said I, a little sharply, for I naturally suspected him of eavesdropping.

"Pretty long, think 'e, but what I want to tell 'e is this, an' mayhap it is right in your line of business."

"Go ahead and get it off your mind."

"Very well, sir; see that house across the way, the one with the window open?"

"Yes."

"There be some'at wrong there, I think."

"How so?" I asked, now really interested.

"I'll tell 'e, sir. There be a gal there nobody knows anythin' about, and I think she be held against 'er will. She never comes out except an old 'ag is somewhere be'ind 'er, and the only time she is seen on the street is when she goes to the post-office. The old woman then either walks be'ind the gal or opposite 'er on the other side of the street. The gal be a comely one, wi' roses on her cheeks, and bright eyes enough to set the lads of all the country-side in love wi' 'er; no one ever gets a chance to speak to 'er. She never answers a question. Some one said she might be a mute, but that be not so, for I 'eard 'er sing this very morning at that window, and I saw 'er face. She seemed to be watching the sun, and looked a bit scared like when she seed me a-looking up at 'er. I gave 'er a neighborly nod, but she didn't seem to see me, and went away from the window all of a sudden, and then I seed the face of the old woman who is always with 'er peer out between the curtains. The old woman has a bad face; and, mark my word—the word of Peter Hetrick, of the King's Own—there's some'at wrong in that house, or I'll stan' a gallon o' best Bass' ale wi' yer honor."

"Perhaps you are right, Mr. Hetrick. Keep my business a secret, and I'll look into the matter, and find out all about the mysterious young lady," said I.

"Not a word. 'E kin depend on me to 'old my tongue, mister; but 'e must tell me what 'e finds out."

"I shall do so."

"Look—look! There she be now!" suddenly cried the landlord.

I glanced at the window to which he pointed, and at the open casement I saw the face of the very girl whose beauty had impressed Bradwood and myself the night before. Yes, the mysterious girl was really the divinity of the post-office, and now I remembered that I saw an old woman on the street opposite the post-office building when the girl passed us.

I caught but a fleeting glimpse of the pretty face, and then it vanished.

Mine host was called within at this moment, and I remained standing where he had left me, looking at the window from which the face of the young girl who so deeply interested me had vanished.

Presently a small white hand was thrust out, and I saw a bit of paper flutter down upon the ground beneath it.

I glanced up and down the street.

There was not a soul in sight, for it was very early, and like a flash I darted across the street, and picked up the paper which had been dropped from the window.

I concealed it in my hand, and returning to the porch of the inn, perused the few lines of writing which were traced with a pencil in a very neat female hand.

"I am a prisoner, guarded by an old woman who watches me all the time. Be under my window at twelve to-night to aid me, and then I will explain all. I met you at the post-office last night, and I feel that I can trust you. Do not fail a friendless girl."

That was what the note said.

I didn't mean to fail that friendless girl. "She felt that she could trust me." Of course she could, and I began to think the real romance of my life was coming, for I confess I was half in love already.

Not a word of this did I say to Bradwood or the landlord. Oh, no, I kept my secret, and it seemed to me that day was a terribly long one, although we devoted it to a fruitless search for Bronson.

"The man must have 'skipped' again, I think," said Bradwood, as somewhat put out at our want of success we discussed the situation over our ale mugs in the back parlor of the King's Own that evening.

I agreed with him, but just at that moment I was thinking more of the pretty face I had seen in the window that morning than of Bronson, the counterfeiter.

At twelve o'clock that night, according to the young girl's request, I was under her window.

Promptly she pushed aside the lattice and appeared.

"Thank heaven, you have come," she said.

I had brought a rope ladder with me, and I threw it up to her, and in a moment she came down it with a heavy satchel in her arms.

I took the satchel, and we hurried away.

"Where do you desire to go? I will serve you in any way in my power," I said, as I felt her clinging to my arm and saw her look up trustingly into my face, while my heart beat faster than usual.

"I want to take the train northward which reaches here at 12:30. My old aunt seeks to keep me a prisoner, so that I cannot obtain possession of an inheritance which my father left me. I shall go to my father's lawyer, and once with him, I shall be safe. Will you aid me?"

"I will. I shall only be too glad to."

"Then escort me to the depot, and keep the secret of my flight. Upon this card is the address of my father's lawyer, and I hope you will call upon me there," the girl said.

Then I told her my name, and she returned the confidence.

It seemed to me that the satchel was terribly heavy, and I so remarked.

"Yes, it contains so many things—almost all my personal possessions," said the girl, with a little laugh.

We reached the depot at last, and I saw her safely on board the train.

I kissed her as we parted; so you see I progressed very rapidly in my wooing.

As I was returning to the inn two men suddenly leaped upon me, and I received a terrible blow on the head and fell, face downward, in the deserted street.

When I returned to consciousness, after a period of oblivion of considerable length, I found myself in a cellar, securely bound, and Jed Bronson, the counterfeiter, and a man who was a stranger, sat watching me.

"Much obliged to you for escorting Mrs. Bronson to the depot and carrying the very plates you wanted so badly. We watched you when you and your pal from Scotland Yard first struck the town, and you've been taken in by a pretty face. Oh, that wife of mine is a jewel, and before you get free she will be beyond your reach, and so will we. I must tell you for your satisfaction that I was disguised as an old woman while here, and you saw me the first night of your arrival, when you visited the post-office. Don't you blame the landlord of the King's Own, for he is innocent of any complicity in the job which we put up on you. Hereafter, Mr. Detective, don't let a pretty face lead you astray; and give my affectionate regards to your pal, Bradwood, when you get out of this. Ta, ta!" and with a mocking bow Bronson and his companion left the cellar, and I was left alone, bound hand and foot, and gagged so that I could make no outcry.

I remained there a day, and when at last I succeeded in liberating myself, the man I wanted had vanished as completely as though the earth had swallowed him.

I never told Bradwood the whole truth of this adventure, but I registered a vow to capture Bronson, "if it took all summer," to use U. S. Grant's phrase, and I spent four months and five hundred dollars in the quest.

At last I ran him down, and it was my turn to laugh when I snapped the bracelets on him and he was my prisoner.

As for his pretty wife, I met her at her husband's trial, but we did not exchange greetings to any great extent, for I was pretty sore at her.

LIGHTNING'S CURIOUS PRANKS

LIGHTNING played some curious pranks on the farm of A. F. Stevens near Gravette, Ark., recently. A bolt struck a small tree and scattered bits of trunk and stump over a 400-foot space. The lightning then ploughed up the ground in different directions and for many yards. It came out of the ground and broke a telephone pole in two. It went into a wire fence and melted some of the wires. It followed a phone wire into the Stevens house, burned out the phone and exploded with a sound as loud as that of a shotgun when fired.

Current News

OVERALLS vs. PAPERALLS

England is being supplied with apparently good blue overalls. Everything seems all right until the laundry is called in to rejuvenate the garment, then it is found that Germany has been up to her old tricks and the fatal bath leaves only the buttons and the linen pockets, for all the rest is paper clever masquerading as blue jeans.

A LIVINGSTONE-STANLEY MEMORIAL

The tree where Stanley met the great English missionary-explorer on November 3, 1871, at Ujiji, in what was formerly German East Africa, is now marked by a stone inscribed "Livingstone-Stanley—1871." It affords a convenient resting place for the irreverent natives.

THIEF SWALLOWS MONEY

After he had been searched without avail, Abraham Abida, an Egyptian cashier, accused of the theft of $1,000 in bills, was taken ill in the police station in Paris.

An emetic was given and soon Abida "coughed up" the missing banknotes. He then confessed that he had chewed and swallowed them when dining with the detectives who arrested him.

RECENT EGYPTIAN FIND

Thousands of mummified bodies of the sacred ibis have been found by the French savant, M. Lacau, in the underground necropolis of the famous ruined temple at Deir Medineh, Egypt. Each bird was in an elaborately decorated vase of earthenware embedded in a sort of cardboard formed by a conglomeration of papyri which totaled hundreds of thousands of written documents. M. Lacau says the find was one of the most important of the late discoveries in Egyptology. The work of deciphering the documents will take years.

HUSBAND'S ASHES STREWN

Mrs. Nellie Kabis faces a herculean task, if the District Court at Cheyenne, Wyo., grants the petition of administrators of her late husband's estate, demanding the delivery of Kabis's ashes to them.

The administrators declare that Kabis's will requested that his body be cremated and the ashes placed in a local cemetery and a tombstone to cost $500 be erected.

Mrs. Kabis says her husband asked her before his death to have his body cremated and to scatter the ashes over the prairie land east of Cheyenne. This she has done, Mrs. Kabis claims, and will be unable to comply with any court order directing her to turn the ashes over to the administrators.

TWO-MILE SIREN BLAST GUARDS BANK

A siren burglar alarm which can be heard for two miles was installed recently in the Staten Island Savings Bank, at Beach and Water streets, Stapleton, N. Y., a few dozen feet from a police station. The siren when tested this morning caused a large crowd to congregate in the streets near the bank.

The siren is set off during the day by stepping on buttons placed at various places in the bank. At night, buttons around and about the safes make it impossible to approach without touching the buttons. The siren when set off blows a blast for about five minutes.

CHURCH ADVERTISES

For the first time since the church has been built—fifteen years—every seat was filled at the morning services in the Oakland Methodist Episcopal Church one Sunday morning recently. In addition, a large number of worshippers had to stand during the service.

The seating capacity of the auditorium is 800, and about a third of the congregation were students from the University of Pittsburgh and the Carnegie Institute of Technology.

No special programme of any kind was the lure. Newspaper advertising was the means used to get the people to church.

"It pays to advertise," said the Rev. Emory Beetham, pastor. "We are going to continue the use of printer's ink, and expect to see our church filled to overflowing each Sunday."

RAIN OF FIRE AND HOT ROCKS

The great eruption on Mount Stromboli continues with undiminished fury. The topmost craters are sending forth a torrential rain of fire and brimstone while the lateral crater is belching molten rocks many tons in weight, and dense smoke clouds hover over the sea for several miles around.

Terrific explosions are heard on the Sicilian shore and athwart the Calabrian mainland, conveying the impression of a stupendous naval bombardment.

Mount Stromboli is on an island of the same name in the Lipari group immediately north of Sicily in the Mediterranean. The island is well cultivated and produces wines, currants, olives and figs.

Stromboli has been the scene of eruptions for many years. None of these disturbances resulted in great loss of life, but in 1907 and 1912 much property was destroyed and inland villages were abandoned. The last violent eruption was in May, 1919.

JAPAN'S IRON RULE IN COREA

Last December, 1920, 386 persons, among them 98 women, who were unable or unwilling to tell the whereabouts of their husbands or sons, were stood up against a wall and shot to death by the Japanese. Thirty-two towns were destroyed in the district of Juntjin. In one single town 145 persons were killed.

AGE OF THE WORLD

The Abbe Theodore Moreaux, Director of Observatory at Bourges, has recently given some estimates of the age of the earth and when the phenomena of life appeared on it. He considers 500,000,000 years about right for the age of the earth and he thinks that the temperature dropped to a point where life could exist about 250,000,000 years ago. Man was a comparative newcomer and the Abbe gives only some tens of thousands of years, thus refuting an estimate of a German scientist, who recently gave 400,000 years as the probable period for the advent of man.

FAVOR WAR HERO

Because of his devotion to Uncle Sam, naturalization officers went to the bedside of Aaron Anderson, a native of Sweden, to secure his application for citizenship.

Anderson is in serious condition at a local sanitarium in Denver, Col., and physicians expressed the belief that he might have a "fighting chance" to live if he were relieved of the worry over his dual allegiance.

Anderson was a member of the A. E. F. and participated in several major operations overseas.

While his health has been poor, he appeared far more concerned over the fact that he was not a United States citizen, and, following a brief recital of the facts in the district court at Littleton, Judge Samuel W. Johnson and Naturalization Examiner N. F. Lenee proceeded to the sick man's bedside to receive his application.

INVENTOR REWARDED

The life-long struggles of an inventor were rewarded at Menominee, Mich., the other day when Marshall B. Boyd received $3,000,000 in stock from the Heywood-Wakefield Company of Boston in exchange for his local baby carriage plant and his inventions that have revolutionized the wicker-weaving world.

The eastern corporation is ninety-six years old and the largest chair manufacturer in America. Lloyd has been added to the directorate and will act as manager of the factory here, which will be operated as a separate unit of the entire corporation.

Three years ago Lloyd brought forth his remarkable inventions whereby woven baby carriages and furniture are produced thirty times faster and better than is possible by hand. Previous to this time he had revolutionized the wire bed spring and thin gauged steel tubing industries by his inventive genius.

ADELINA PATTI'S CASTLE SOLD

Craig-y-Nos-Castle, Wales, the home of the late Mme. Adelina Patti, has been sold to the Welsh National Memorial Association, but the residue of the estate, comprising farms, sheep runs, mountain pasturage, limestone quarries, ground rents and cottages, will be sold later.

When the castle was first purchased by Mme. Patti, it only had limited accommodations, but to enable her to have her friends around her and to entertain on a considerable scale, which she was very fond of doing, she had extensive improvements carried out which cost her nearly $500,000. Included in the alterations was the construction of a small theatre with a seating capacity of about 300 persons.

VOLCANO SPOUTING LAVA

The Volcano of Kilauea is overflowing from the pit of Halemaumau. All of the trails in the old crater bottom have been destroyed.

Five flows are running north, south and west, and a fountain of lava, the largest in the volcano's history, is spouting high, surrounded by hundreds of other fountains. The lava lake rose eighty feet in eight hours. The main flow is running at the rate of forty miles an hour.

The outburst is believed by scientists to be due to an equinoxial change.

Police guards are holding hundreds of tourists and automobiles at a considerable distance from the scene because of the danger of a greater outburst.

A GOLD MINE IN A GARAGE

Some time ago, while excavating for a large underground gasoline tank at the Grass Valley Garage, Nevada county, California, Mr. A. B. Snyder, the owner, uncovered a well-defined ledge of gold quartz at a depth of six feet. Mr. Snyder decided to do some mining inside of his garage. A windlass was installed and a shaft sunk, and in a short time some beautiful gold specimens were extracted from below the garage floor. The shaft was sunk to a depth of sixty feet, and so much water was encountered that an electric pump was installed in the shaft to keep the water out.

During the mining operations several tons of gold quartz were taken out of the shaft and drifts under the garage. This was crushed and milled in a near-by stamp mill. The quartz gave returns of $137.50 per ton.

After working the mine for a short time the waste dirt taken out accumulated in a large pile which extended the full length of the floor inside the building, leaving little room for automobiles. Mr. Snyder decided he had mined enough and shut down. A local gold-mining company then purchased the mineral right under the garage and are now working the ledge through their mine. Because of its discovery in the Grass Valley Garage, the ledge is known to mining as the "Garage Ledge."

LOCATE POPULATION CENTRE

The centre of population as disclosed by the 1920 census is located in the extreme southeast corner of Owen County, Ind., 8.3 miles southeast of the town of Spencer, the Census Bureau announced to-day.

During the last decade the centre of population continued to move westward, advancing 9.8 miles in that direction and about one-fifth of a mile north from Bloomington, Ind., where it was located by the Census of 1910.

The bureau attributed the westward movement in the last decade principally to the increase of more than 1,000,000 in the population of the State of California.

FROM FIREARMS TO AUTOMOBILES

The works of an Austrian arms manufacturing company in the city of Stephyr, Upper Austria, are now manufacturing high grade six-cylinder passenger automobiles and trucks by a new method. The end of the war found them with an equipment capable of producing 1,000,000 rifles and other small arms per year. Now they are making a few sporting rifles of the "Mannlicher" model and shotguns. During the war the works employed about 15,000 men; they now have about 6,000. Thus far the company has produced about 400 automobiles; it expects to produce 4,000 in 1921 and 10,000 in 1922, and to increase after that to 20,000 machines per year. It is said that the automobiles are in great demand, and are now sold in England, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Poland and Rumania.

SAW LOST BOY IN DREAM

Its resting place revealed in the dream of a brother, an eight-year-old lad, the body of Roy Tew, drowned in the Arkansas River near Ledwidge, was recovered near Conway, Ark.

Roy was picking up driftwood along the river bank and fell into the stream when the bank caved in.

Next morning his younger brother, Abner, told his parents as soon as he awoke that he had had a dream in which he saw where Roy's body was concealed.

The parents paid little attention to the lad, but he insisted so strongly that he was allowed to go and make a search. He walked straight to a log which extended from the river bank and pointed to an object, which proved to be the dead boy's knee, protruding through the sand, exactly as Abner had described from his dream.

SPARROW AT SERVICE

Emulation of St. Francis of Assisi, who 700 years ago preached to birds and called them "little brothers and sisters," is being practiced in Springfield, Ill., involuntarily by Rev. E. G. Sandmeyer, pastor of Laurel M. E. Church, who for the third time the other day had birds in the audience.

Recently a common sparrow flew in at the doorway while the audience was bowed in prayer. It perched on an electric light fixture and sat there until singing commenced, then chirped and flew to another fixture. It remained throughout the service and departed through a window.

This same bird, it is believed, made its first visit some weeks ago. Two weeks ago it returned with a mate. The other day it was alone. Dr. Sandmeyer indicated he was not entirely pleased with the visits, as they had a tendency, he said, to distract the attention of the congregation.

A PERUVIAN MARVEL

One of the most interesting trips afforded by the present transportation facilities of Peru is that over the Oroyo Railroad, which runs from Callao to the gold fields of Cerro de Pasco. It is considered one of the wonders in the Peruvian world. It is certainly the greatest feat of railway engineering in either hemisphere. Commencing in Callao, it ascends the narrow valley of the Rimac, rising nearly five thousand feet in the first forty-six miles. Thence it goes through the intricate gorges of the Sierras till it tunnels the Andes at an altitude of fifteen thousand six hundred and forty-five feet, the highest point in the world where a piston-rod is moved by steam. The wonder is doubted on remembering that this elevation is reached in seventy-eight miles.

DEATH FROM THE AIR

The Chemical Warfare Service has discovered a liquid poison so strong that three drops will kill any one whose skin it touches, it became known the other day.

Falling like rain from nozzles attached to airplanes the liquid would kill everything in the aircraft's path, according to a high official of the service.

Description of what the new war weapon would do, in the opinion of this official, follows:

"One plane carrying two tons of the liquid could cover an area 100 feet wide by seven miles long in one trip and could deposit enough material to kill every man in that area, and if those on the ground were not protected by gas masks, the area of fatality would be many times greater.

"The only limit to the quantity of this liquid which could be made is the amount of available electric power, as nearly every nation has practically an unlimited supply of the necessary raw material. It would be entirely possible for this country to manufacture several thousand tons a day if the necessary plants were built.

"During the Argonne offensive the entire first American army of 1,250,000 men occupied an area approximately forty kilometers long by twenty kilometers wide. If Germany had had 4,000 tons of this material and 400 planes equipped for its distribution the entire first army could have been annihilated in twelve hours.

"The Chemical Warfare Service is developing protective clothing to entirely cover the wearer and make him impervious to the deadly liquid."

TAKE NOTICE!

The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. Here are the latest numbers:

NO.

29 "The Thirteenth Door," by Edith Sessions Tupper.
30 "The Game of Detective Carew," by L. Jerome.
31 "Law-maker and Law-breaker," by Beulah Poynter.
32 "The Counterfeit Heiress," by Inspector J. Harrigan.
33 "Tracked to China," by Chief Roger O'Brien.
34 "After the German Spies," by May Halsey Miller.
35 "The Clue in the Box," by Alexander Douglas.
36 "Trailed by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieutenant Robert W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "Sanctuary," by William Hamilton Osborne.
43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by Charles F. Oursler.
44 "The Sign of the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 "The House With 30 Steps," by Ralph D. Porter.
48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
50 "The $200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura Reid Montgomery.
53 "The Blackjack," by Wm. Hamilton Osborne.
54 "The Whispering Head," by Chas. F. Oursler.
55 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by Beulah Poynter.
56 "The Secret of the Sealed Book," by Ethel Rosemon.
57 "The Clue of Steel," by Willis Lathrop.
58 "Alias Louis Vardon," by William Hamilton Osborne.
59 "Mystery of the Old-Time Club," by Caroline Bingold.
60 "Caught With the Evidence," by Ethel Rosemon.
61 "A Little Gold Spider," by Cecil Burleigh.
62 "The Velvet Touch," by Julian Darrow.
63 "The Clue of the Red Lamp," by Chas. F. Oursler.
64 "The Scheme of Solomon Snare," by Wm. Hamilton Osborne.
65 "Quicker Than the Eye," by Ralph Cummins.
66 "The Clue in the Dark Room," by Hamilton Craigie.
67 "The Tongue of Osiris," by Marc Edmund Jones.
68 "Detective Wade's Big Case," by Ethel Rosemon.
69 "The Spirit Bell," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
70 "The House Behind the Wall," by Julian Darrow.
71 "The Admiral's Spoons," by Wm. Hamilton Osborne.
72 "The Canine Clue," by Thos. J. Lally.
73 "The Psychic Enemy," by Arthur Wm. Andreen.
74 "The Wonder Girl," by Ralph Cummins.
75 "On the Wrong Trail," by Ethel Rosemon.
76 "The Spirit Witness," by Chas. F. Oursler.
77 "The Little White Room," by Marc Edmund Jones.
78 "The Stolen Year," by Edmund Elliot.
79 "The Affair at Hollywood House," by William Kofoed.
80 "A Keyless Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie.
81 "Professor Satan," by Charles Fulton Oursler.
82 "Who Killed McNally?" by Beulah Poynter.
83 "The 'Czar' and the Ring," by Edmund Elliot.

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A CLOCK BUILT OF STRAW.

From Switzerland, the home of the watch and clock industry, comes the description of a clock made entirely of straw and willow withes. Of course there is no particular value in use of this material, except to demonstrate the ingenuity of the clock-maker. In this clock there is not a single piece of metal. Even the chimes are made of straw put through a special process, so to give them a ringing tone when struck. Instead of the ordinary swinging pendulum this is provided with a see-saw movement, there being two weights on each side. One great difficulty in making the interior mechanism of the clock was to get the proper elasticity in the springs, which were pressed and turned into coils very much resembling Chinese bamboo. The clock is nine feet high with a face eighteen inches in diameter. The base is of wicker construction from which four heavy linked straw chains serve as guys to keep the clock properly balanced. The movement operates twenty-four hours on winding. It took more than thirty months to complete the clock.

LITTLE ADS

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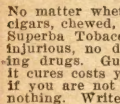

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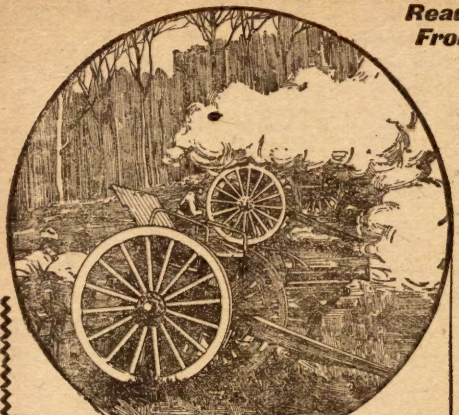
Old King, the most famous fox hunter in Kentucky, was convicted at Winchester, Ky., on a charge of sheep slaughter. County Judge W. Lee Evans ruled the dog was guilty, but that instead of the death penalty, asked by the prosecuting attorney, the judge ruled that Old King must be exiled from Kentucky for the rest of his life.

Old King was tried on a charge that he, with two puppies, had killed some sheep belonging to Robert Taylor. The two puppies were acquitted.

Old King and the puppies belonged to Frank Jones, noted fox hunter, and when the verdict of exile was pronounced, Jones announced he had received letters from all over the country, the burden being: "Don't let them kill that dog. Ship him to me, and he will be safe and receive every care."

County Attorney H. H. Moore and V. W. Bush prosecuted the dog, and Jones employed Rodney Haggard and Benjamin Fishback, attorneys.



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I have been very slow in sending you an answer. I received my Moving Picture Machine a few weeks ago and I think it is a dandy, and it shows the pictures clear just as you said it would. I am very proud of it. I thank you very much for it and I am glad to have it. I gave an entertainment two days after I got it. Leopold Lamontagne, 54 Summer Ave., Central Falls, R. I.

Sold His for $10.00 and Ordered Another

Some time ago I got one of your Machines and I am very much pleased with it. After working it for about a month I sold it for $10.00 to a friend of mine. He has it and entertains his family nightly. I have now decided to get another one of your machines. Michael Ehereth, Mandan, N. Dak.

Would Not Give Away for $25.00

My Moving Picture Machine is a good one and I would not give it away for $25.00. It's the best machine I ever had and I wish everybody could have one. Addie Breaky, Jeanesville, Pa. Box 34.

Better Than a $12.00 Machine

I am slow about turning in my thanks to you, but my Moving Picture Machine is all right. I have had it a long time and it has not been broken yet. I have seen a $12.00 Machine but would not swap mine for it. Robert Lineberry, care of Revolution Store, Greenboro, N. C.

How You Can Get This Great Moving Picture Machine—Read My Wonderful Offer to You

HERE IS what you are to do in order to get this amazing Moving Picture Machine and the real Moving Pictures: Send your name and address—that is all. Write name and address very plainly. Mail to-day. As soon as I receive it I will mail you 20 of the most beautiful premium pictures you ever saw—all brilliant and shimmering colors. These pictures are printed in many colors and among the titles are such subjects as *"Betsy Ross Making the First American Flag"*—*"Washington at Home,"*—*"Battle of Lake Erie," etc.* I want you to distribute these premium pictures on a special 40-cent offer among the people you know. When you have distributed the 20 premium pictures on my liberal offer you will have collected $8.00. Send the $8.00 to me and I will immediately send you FREE the Moving Picture Machine with complete Outfit and the Box of Film.

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POURS OIL ON FIRE

Six members of the family of James Adkins, living fourteen miles north of Washington Court House, Ohio, were burned to death when fire destroyed their home. Adkins was fatally burned.

The fire followed the explosion of a coal stove into which Adkins poured kerosene on hot coals in an effort to start a blaze quickly.

Soon after 2 o'clock in the morning Mr. Adkins arose to heat water for his three-weeks-old daughter, who was ill. He was pouring kerosene into the stove from a two-gallon can, when there was an explosion, and the burning oil was thrown to all parts of the room. Mrs. Adkins and her baby, who occupied a bed in a corner of the room, were enveloped in flames. The three other children and Mr. Bennett occupied a single room on the second floor of the four-room dwelling.

Adkins rushed from the burning building, rolled in the mud, and then ran a half mile to a neighbor's house for help.

By the time neighbors arrived at the dwelling it was a mass of smouldering embers. Adkins was brought to a hospital here.

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